



Cha-Ching Classroom Activity **Spend Your Money Wisely, My Friend**

Overview: In this activity, students play a game to experience the challenges and rewards of balancing needs and wants. After viewing the video [Spend Your Money Wisely My Friend](#), students work together to define needs and wants and provide examples. Students play a game in which they make decisions about how they want to spend a given amount of money, but they have to stay on their toes because—just as in real life—circumstances change! Finally, students summarize their earn, spend, save, and donate plans to see how far they’ve come in learning about money.

Target Audience: Grades 3–6

Activity Duration: 45 minutes

Essential Questions

- What is the difference between a want and a need?
- How can I balance my spending and saving?
- What is it like to make hard decisions about money?

Objectives

Students will:

- Differentiate between needs and wants
- Apply budgeting strategies to pay for needs and wants

Activity Vocabulary:

- Budget
- Savings
- Needs
- Wants
- Priorities
- Comparison Shopping
- Instant Gratification
- Advertisers and Marketers

Materials

- Video: [Spend Your Money Wisely My Friend](#)
- Handout: *Spend Your Money Wisely My Friend* lyrics (1 per group)



- Budget Game: [Living on a 20 Square Salary](#) (from West Virginia Department of the Treasury, Financial Education Programs)
 - Other versions:
 - [The Bean Game](#)
 - [The Bean Game: Living on a “20 Bean Salary”](#)
- Game play materials (may include game cards, beans, tokens)
- Handout: *My Money Plan* (1 per student)
- Ads from local grocery and department stores as well as ads from various superstores like Walmart, Target, etc. (either in print form or online)
- Chart paper
- Self-stick notes

Other Spend Episodes

- [Earn, Save, Spend & Donate](#)
- [Please Little Spender Think](#)
- [When You Get Money](#)
- [Big, Big Waste of Money](#)
- [So Yesterday](#)
- [Cha-Cha-Choices](#)

Procedure

1. (Note for the Teacher: This is the one choice kids know the most about! Unlike earning and saving, spending is visible and usually has immediate, tangible results. Your students may have a lot of “expertise” to add!) Engage students by asking the following questions:
 - Are you a spender or a saver?
 - When you choose to ‘spend’ what do you like to spend money on? (Is that good or bad? Why?)
 - When you’re spending, What is the difference between a need and a want? Can you give some examples?
 - Can we buy anything and everything—needs and wants? Why can’t we just buy the things we need and the things we want?
 - The name of today’s activity is Spend Your Money Wisely, My Friend. What do you think it means to spend your money wisely?
2. Say, “We’ve learned a lot about earning, saving, and donating. We have even made plans—or budgets—for each. Spending is one of the choices you have with your money. And it’s not good or bad to spend. It’s part of life (a big part of it). But there is a difference between spending and



thinking about your spending. That’s what the video we’re going to watch is about—thinking about spending.

3. Show the video [Spend Your Money Wisely My Friend](#). (Optional: Share the *Spend You Money Wisely My Friend* lyrics.)
4. Discuss the video with the class. Did they like the video? Why or why not? Ask students to describe the choices the band made and identify some of their needs and wants. Ask, “What choices did they make? Which characters spent wisely? Which did not?”
5. Divide students into small groups and explain that they are going to play a game. Distribute game play materials and go over the directions together. As students play the game, they will work together to make financial decisions. Conversations may get heated as choices are made; remind students that sometimes it is challenging to make hard choices about money, but they must work together and agree. Remind students there are no right or wrong answers; all of our choices depend on our end goals.
6. After playing the game, regroup students to debrief. Ask them to share their thoughts and ideas about the experience. Ask questions to extend their thinking, such as the following:
 - Was it difficult to make choices between wants and needs as you balanced your budget?
 - What was most challenging? What was most rewarding?
 - What kinds of conversations did you have during the game?
 - What kinds of strategies did you apply for moving your money around?
 - What would you do differently next time?
 - What questions do you have about making decisions like this in real life?
 - What advice do you have?
7. Distribute a copy of *My Money Plan* to each student. Have each student write a brief summary of their plans for earning, spending, saving, and donating. They’ve come a long way!
8. Have students share their plan with the class as time allows. Ask students to describe the most important thing(s) they learned from the Cha-Ching videos and activities.
9. Encourage students to complete *Family Activity #4: Spending Wisely* with their families.

Optional Resources

- [Teaching your child to spend wisely](#)
- [5 Ways to Cut Spending...and Still Get to Do and Buy Cool Things](#)
- [Teaching Your Children to Handle Money—Family Life](#)



National Standards

National Standards for Financial Literacy

2: Buying Goods and Services

People cannot buy or make all the goods and services they want; as a result, people choose to buy some goods and services and not buy others. People can improve their economic well-being by making informed spending decisions, which entails collecting information, planning, and budgeting.

2.4.7: Planning for spending can help people make informed choices. A budget is a plan for spending, saving, and managing income.

C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

Economics: Economic Decision Making

D2.Eco.1.3-5. Compare the benefits and costs of individual choices.

D2.Eco.2.K-2. Identify the benefits and costs of making various personal decisions.

D2.Eco.2.3-5. Identify positive and negative incentives that influence the decisions people make.



Spend Your Money Wisely My Friend

Lyrics

We need to make our minds up today.
When we play they are turning away (This broken speaker's breaking up the feed).
Look they're leaving at lightning speed!

We have our wants and then we have our needs [You know we need this!].
Let's go and get the best deal in town, yeah!

Spend (spend) your money wisely my friend.
Get the best price from what you have to spend.
Spend your money wisely show know-how.
You don't have to spend it all (Spend your money wisely show know-how)!

I compared all the stores and was really surprised.
Turns out there's different price tags for the same merchandise!
If I shop around and take my time,
I can get more value for this money of mine.
I'm trying not to get distracted (Get distracted)
But I see cool things and I'm attracted [Hello]

Spend (spend) your money wisely my friend.
It will go really quick if you over-extend.
Spend your money wisely show know-how.
You don't have to spend it all.
Spend your money wisely show know-how!

Something's come up, I'm ready to spend.
Is it a need or a want? Let me comprehend,
Do I need it or do I have something similar?
Cha-Ching needs a speaker if we want to go far.
Just wait, and think through the alternatives
The savings other options may give, yeah!

Spend (spend) your money wisely my friend.
Work out what you want is what I recommend.
Spend your money wisely show know-how.
You don't have to spend it all [It don't have to be now]
Spend your money wisely show know-how!

We've got a clear and strong aim for something we need.
We're a little short on cash, but Justin's got a lead.
We made the effort and have ourselves to thank
For the effort we have some extra cash in the bank.



We got our speaker and some money to spare
Makes us feel like millionaires!

Spend (spend) your money wisely my friend.
You can reach the stars when you don't misspend.
Spend your money wisely show know-how.
You don't have to spend it all.
Spend your money wisely show know-how!



My Money Plan

Earn



Save



Spend



Donate

