

Ethical Dilemma Activity: The Data Breach Decision

This framework integrates biblical principles and values—such as stewardship, truthfulness, love for neighbor, and submission to authority—while maintaining a structured process for a group of 4-5 to collaboratively resolve the dilemma. How would you modify this activity to work for your team or organization?

Scenario

You are a team of IT managers at a mid-sized healthcare company that stores sensitive patient data. One day, your system is hacked, and an anonymous group steals personal health information for 10,000 patients, including names, addresses, and medical histories. The hackers demand a \$50,000 ransom to not release the data publicly. Your company has insurance that could cover the ransom but paying it might encourage future attacks. Alternatively, you could refuse to pay and notify the affected patients and authorities, risking reputational damage and potential lawsuits. Your team has 24 hours to decide.

Objective

As a group, decide whether to pay the ransom or refuse and report the breach, using the Judeo-Christian ethical decision-making matrix provided below to guide your process.

Group Size

4-5 participants

Time

45-60 minutes

Instructions

1. Read the Scenario: Take 5 minutes as a group to read and discuss the scenario, ensuring everyone understands the situation.
2. Assign Roles (Optional): Assign roles like Team Leader, Note-Taker, Timekeeper, and Spokesperson, or proceed collaboratively.
3. Apply the Ethical Matrix: Work through the matrix step-by-step, discussing each section as a group. Record your thoughts.
4. Reach a Decision: After completing the matrix, reach a consensus on your final decision.
5. Debrief: Spend 5-10 minutes reflecting on making decision when values are in tension. How could you use/modify this activity for training within your organization?

Judeo-Christian Ethical Decision-Making Matrix

This matrix integrates Judeo-Christian spiritual ethics, drawing from biblical teachings such as honesty (Exodus 20:16), love for neighbor (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39), stewardship (Genesis 1:28), and submission to governing authorities (Romans 13:1). Discuss and fill out each section as a group.

STEP	QUESTION	DISCUSSION POINTS
1. Seek God's Guidance	What does prayer and scripture reveal about this situation?	Begin with prayer; Consider Prov 3:5-6
2. Define the ethical tension	What moral conflict arises from this dilemma?	Identify the ethical struggle.
3. Identify stakeholders	Who are the affected neighbors or stewards in this decision?	List the stakeholders
4. Biblical principles	Which scriptural values apply?	Discuss the principles
5. Options	What choices align with God's character, his desires?	Outline all possible options
6. Kingdom Consequences	What kingdom consequences/gains may result?	Evaluate the potential ways God could work.
7. Duty to Man and God	What obligations do we have towards God, my neighbor, and authorities?	Consider ethics of obeying authorities, loving others, and stewardship
8. Decision	Which action best honors God in the tension between love and justice?	State your choice justified by scripture and matrix discussion
9. Action Plan	How will you enact this decision with courage and reliance upon God?	Outline the steps.

Facilitator Tips

- Encourage participants to cite specific scriptures during discussion (e.g., "What does Romans 13:1 say about reporting to authorities?").
- If the group struggles, prompt with questions like, "How would you prioritize patient's needs according to the ethic of the two greatest commandments?" or "What may stewardship look like here?"

Outcome

The group will arrive at a decision grounded in Judeo-Christian ethics (e.g., "We refuse to pay and will report the breach, trusting God's justice [Micah 6:8] and loving our neighbors by being truthful [Matthew 22:39]") with a corresponding action plan. This exercise highlights how spiritual values can guide practical choices, fostering both ethical clarity and faith-based unity.