



**Respect Life Week 2018-19**  
**Grades 7-9 Lesson Plan**  
**Loneliness**

**Goal:**

There is an epidemic of loneliness in our world that is affecting people young and old alike. The busier we get, the more we seem to lose the ability to interact on a personal level, resulting in many people who feel alone. This lesson invites students to be more aware of how they can befriend the lonely and what to do when they realize they need friends too.

**Watch Video Clips:**

This lesson invites students to think of loneliness beyond their own experience to something that can cause serious consequences in the lives of people. We start by watching a light- hearted story:

Watch ["Amazing Humans – Overcoming Loneliness in the Elderly"](#)

**Questions for Discussion:**

- What compelled Mike to give up his job and spend time with the elderly?
- What does this experience do for the elderly?
- What does it do for Mike?
- Does spending time with someone overcome loneliness and isolation alone, or is there more to it? Was Mike intentional about this job in a particular way? What can we learn from the story?

We know that long-term loneliness can lead to mental health issues, physical health issues, and can further remove people from a sense of community. While not the only cause of violence, there seems to be a connection between chronic loneliness and violent outbursts, such as mass shootings.

Watch ["Parkland: Thoughts & Prayers Aren't Enough"](#)

**Questions for Discussion:**

- What solution is offered in this video for overcoming violence in our culture? Do students think this is possible?
- What does it look like to share the love of Christ with other people? How can we do it?
- Is loving and befriending someone in this way enough to help overcome extreme loneliness or violent tendencies? Why or why not?

- Can hatred truly be conquered by love? What can one person do to make a difference?

Action:

What can we do to make our world less lonely? How can we be intentional about breaking down barriers and building friendship?

Ask the students for suggestions on simple ways they can do this.

Watch: [“Look Up!”](#)

Questions for Discussion:

- What is the point of this video?
- Do you agree that constant engagement with your phone/screen can cause behavior changes that tend toward isolation? In other words, does constant attention to your phone mean fewer actual interactions with friends?

Is the class willing to take on a challenge – pledge to take a “digital fast” once or twice a week to see if they can come up with other things to do with their time? Invite students to choose one evening per week and ask them to make a commitment to putting their phone away for two straight hours. Then ask them to report the next day in class. What did they do? How did they fill their time? Keep doing this for a few weeks and determine whether students find it easier over time to stay away from screens. Do they look forward to the break and the opportunity to try something new? Why or why not?

Is it possible to intentionally move forward committed to “looking up” from screens more often and “looking out” for people in need of friendship?

Prayer:

You have blessed us, O God, with the gift of friendship, the bonding of persons in a circle of love.

We thank you for such a blessing:

for friends who love us, who share our sorrows, who laugh with us in celebration, who bear our pain, who need us as we need them, who weep as we weep,

who hold us when words fail, and who give us the freedom to be ourselves.

Bless our friends with health, wholeness, life, and love.

Amen.