

## **Respect Life Week: Youth Night Resources**

### Knowing My Value

Opening Prayer: Prayer to St. Raphael to Intercede for Those Contemplating Suicide

Holy Archangel Raphael, appointed by God to guide, protect and heal, I entrust to you all people who at this moment are contemplating suicide. You guided young Tobias on his journey and protected him from the spirit of death which sought to destroy his life. I ask you to protect all people from the road that leads to physical and spiritual death, especially those in most danger of despair and suicide. Just as you led Tobias by the hand, lead them away from the sadness of addiction to peace and joy. O holy Raphael, whose name means, “God has healed”, bring them the Lord’s healing. Lord God, hear the prayer I make together with your faithful servant Raphael.  
Amen.

Topic Introduction:

*“We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.”* — Mother Teresa

The topic for this lesson is very heavy and can be difficult to talk about. This discussion does not seek to solve any medical problems but looks at the root cause of much of teen and youth depression and anxiety, which lies in a devalued sense of self and a failure to understand their place in creation. Teens who react strongly to this material may need follow-up care.

Mother Teresa speaks of the poverty of being unloved. Though we are loved unconditionally and infinitely by God, we can feel that we are unworthy of love and dignity. We must learn to accept the love of God and share it with those around us, especially those who feel unloved. There is no shame in struggling with depression or another mental illness. We must take courage to ask for help when we need it.

Suggested videos and questions:

#### Talking About Suicide

- Suicide has wide reaching and detrimental effects, yet it is only discussed in hushed tones. Don’t be afraid to have an open and honest conversation about suicide and mental illness.
- For resources to facilitate discussion or look for answers to questions:
  - <https://www.helpguide.org/>
  - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
  - <https://focusequip.org/what-you-or-your-friends-need-to-know-about-suicidal-thoughts/>

**If you or a loved one are considering suicide:**

You are loved, wanted, and not alone. In an emergency, **dial 911**. If you need to speak to someone about suicide prevention, **call 1-800-273-8255 or text HOME to 741741 for 24/7 free, confidential help.**

### Irreplaceable

- Sometimes we all feel “replaceable”. Take time to reflect on Sr. Maria Anne Michela’s words and what makes each of us irreplaceable.
- What can make us feel that we are replaceable? How do we overcome those feelings?

### The Truth About You

- Dr. Linda Major once said that the true motivation behind every human action is the desire to know we are loved and that evil stems from the belief that we are unlovable. Do you find any truth in these statements?

Discussion:

Is it hard to believe that we are good and loveable? Why or why not?

How can the crucifix help us when we feel lost or hopeless?

How can we show those around us that they are irreplaceable?

Activity:

Fill the Bucket! Have everyone anonymously write down on strips of paper what makes each member of the group irreplaceable. Make a pile (or put in buckets!) for each person with all the papers that say what makes them irreplaceable.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, I come before you today in need of hope. There are times when I feel helpless. There are times when I feel weak. I pray for hope. I need hope for a better future. I need hope for a better life. I need hope for love and kindness. Father, thank you for sending your Son to bring me life— Life to the fullest; life for eternity. Thank you for allowing me to share in Christ's Resurrection. Christ is alive in me, and His Spirit dwells deeply in my being, even when I cannot see you or even feel your presence. Thank you for making all things possible for those who believe. Thank you for guiding me right now. May I continue to receive guidance and hope from you this hour and every hour. Amen.