

Respect Life Week: Resources for Youth Nights

Topic: Assisted Suicide

Opening Prayer: Begin by asking the Holy Spirit to be with your group at this time so as to grow closer to God, recognize His mercy and love in our lives, and better live out His will for us. Feel free to incorporate Scripture into your prayer, such as [2 Corinthians 12:9-10](#). There are several songs that would be appropriate to pray with, including ["Take a Moment"](#) by Will Reagan and ["Praise You In This Storm"](#) by Casting Crowns.

Intro to Topic: Leader introduces assisted suicide, the current debate surrounding it, it's status in current legislation, and the Church's stance. The USCCB's [Top Reasons to Oppose Assisted Suicide](#) will be a helpful resource.

Suggested videos and discussion questions:

[Pulling Back the Curtain on Assisted Suicide](#) 3 minute video sharing the economic and social effects of assisted suicide on a community. This video has many compelling statistics and good graphics but leaders should know that it is specifically addressing California.

- Discussion Questions: What are your reactions to statistics such as these? As Catholics, how can we support those who are suffering and resist the cultural shift toward assisted suicide?

[Man of Steel](#) 5 minute video of JJ, a former Marine fighting brain cancer, whose desire to live for his family, even through his disease, is a great inspiration. Like Brittany Maynard, JJ had terminal brain cancer but chose to live rather than die by assisted suicide.

- Discussion Questions: How does JJ's story contribute to the discussion surrounding assisted suicide? What were his reasons for choosing to live? From where did he get his strength? How could this video help you explain the Church's stance against assisted suicide?

[Me Before You Trailer](#) 3 minute trailer of popular teen romance movie that came out in 2016 and promotes assisted suicide as a sacrificial, romantic act of love. Many teens may have seen or heard about this film.

- [Sr. Helena Burns Review](#) for group to read or leader to recap
- Discussion Questions from [National Catholic Register](#):
 - Will's character suffers from severe depression and suicidal ideation, both of which are seen in able-bodied people as mental illness and treated by healthcare professionals. Why, in your opinion, are depression and suicidal ideation accepted as not signs of mental illness for wheelchair users? Should they be?
 - This book/movie has been applauded by the able-bodied community, but almost universally condemned by those in the disability community. Is that an indication that perhaps there's a problem with the way his life has been portrayed?
 - Is it socially acceptable to be disabled in American society?

General Discussion Questions:

- In your opinion, what message is the increasing support for assisted suicide sending about our society's value for human life?
- Do you think that the legalization of assisted suicide would impact the way that teen suicide is viewed?
- As Catholics, how can we respond with love and mercy to the issue of assisted suicide?

Activity:

- [Make cards for Rosary Hill Home](#): Home in Westchester County for individuals suffering from terminal cancer. Make handmade holiday-themed cards in packs of 30 for the residents to brighten their day and remind them that they are loved. Contact: Sr. Mary Thanh, (914) 769-0114 or srmjoseph@hawthorne-dominicans.org

Closing Prayer: Intercessions from the [USCCB](#)

For all who are about to die: that through our love, care, and devotion, they might know the beauty of life, as they prepare for death;

We pray to the Lord: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those who have grown tired of life, and especially for those tempted to suicide: that God might grant them patient endurance and the support of loved ones;

We pray to the Lord: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those tempted to despair because of constant pain: that they might join their suffering to the Cross of Christ;

We pray to the Lord: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For nurses and all professionals who care for the sick and dying: that they will be given the grace to love each patient with the love of Christ, and to never see those they care for as a burden;

We pray to the Lord: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those who have grown weak or infirm: that we might see God's power in their fragility and experience a new revelation of God's love for them;

We pray to the Lord: *Lord, hear our prayer.*