

# Theme: Loneliness

Title: "Don't Build Walls - Build Bridges"

**The purpose of this talk:** for the kids to realize that everyone has times of loneliness, that God is with us always, and that we need to take care of each other

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## INTRODUCTION

### Game: "Out of the Circle"

Have about eight people stand in a circle. One is outside the circle. His goal is to get inside the circle by any means. **Don't tell the kids in the circle to stop him.** Just say, "Begin!" Usually those in the circle do their best to prevent him from getting inside their circle.

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## QUESTIONS

To help the leader prepare, **possible** answers are given after each question in italics. The purpose of the discussion is for the young people to express **their** thoughts. Leaders should mostly share their ideas at the end of the discussion.

1. Question to those who stood in the circle: Why did you prevent the outside person from entering your circle?

*(The most common answer is: "Because you told us to," but you didn't say that. It was their idea. If they did let the person into the circle, ask why they did that).*

2. Question to the person who tried to enter the circle:

How did you feel when you were not allowed into the circle?

Bridge: This is what loneliness can feel like sometimes, and this is our topic today.

3. What are the causes of loneliness? (Write down their answers.)

*No friends; no one understands; moving to a new place; some tragedy happened; feeling excluded from a group; not knowing how to connect.*

4. Is it possible to be lonely in a crowd? Why would that happen?

*YES. Everyone is having fun and for whatever reason you can't share in their fun; you don't know anyone; no one understands you; you are going through something nobody knows about*

5. When does a person feel especially lonely?

*When relationships are broken; someone moves far away or dies; when going to a new place/school; when your mind is preoccupied with personal problems.*

6. Do you think Jesus ever felt lonely? If so, when? If not, why not?

*In the Garden of Gethsemane; on the cross; perhaps all the time, because many did not understand who He was, even his own disciples,*

7. Are there people who enjoy being alone? Why?

*There is a difference between wanting solitude and feeling lonely: a person who enjoys being alone still needs to know that there are others who care about him/her; sometimes people say or act like they want to be alone, but they really are just afraid of rejection or feeling vulnerable. Without their problems, they might really want to be around other people.*

8. Does God help you when you feel lonely? How?

*We can always talk to Him; He understands how we feel; He tells us that we are important to Him; we feel more confident around family and other believers, knowing we are accepted by Him; knowing Him gives us a reason to reach out to other people even when they are not reaching out to us.*

9. How can we help those who are lonely?

*Welcome them into our circle; be a friend; listen and encourage; pay attention and notice the people who are not in the middle of everything.*

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## **WRAP UP**

### **1. Defining loneliness**

What is loneliness? The painful realization that you don't have a deep, trusting relationship with anyone.

There are two kinds of loneliness.

- The first is when a person has no friends. It may be the first time he or she is at a new school or town and has not yet met anyone. Or it may be that they have difficulty making friends.
- The second is when a person is going through a difficult time or feels no one understands him.

### **2. Loneliness is common.**

Even Jesus experienced periods of loneliness. *(Review what was said in question 6.)* (You can also talk about the prophet Elijah fleeing from Queen Jezebel and thinking he was the only prophet of God left. - 1 Kings 18:22 and 19: 9-10)

About 40% of people who suffer from loneliness never talk about it.

Researchers have found that 15-20% of teenagers experience loneliness painfully.

### 3. What to do when we feel lonely

First, what **not** to do:

- Don't ignore it and think it will just go away.
- Don't load yourself up with lots of things to do

When we stuff negative emotions inside, they don't usually go away but come back later in a negative way, like depression and health problems.

Here's five ways to deal with feeling lonely:

1. Know firmly that this is not a permanent condition. It may change soon.

2. Recognize the value of being alone, the value of solitude.

Being alone (to be at peace, to reflect on life, to pray, to be renewed) can be helpful.

Feeling lonely is not the same as being alone; loneliness is a sense of rejection.

3. Don't exaggerate out of negativity. Don't think, "No one eats with me. No one talks to me. No one loves me." Ask yourself, 'Are these things really true?'

4. Reach out to others: get out of your comfort zone.

Make the effort to meet new people

Smile and be friendly and open to those around you.

*Famous quote: "If you go looking for a friend, you're going to find they're very scarce. If you go out to be a friend, you'll find them everywhere". ~Zig Ziglar.*

5. Remember God is with us and understands us, so we are not alone (Psalm 139: 7-12).

### 4. We can share God's love with those who feel lonely

If someone is lonely, offer them your friendship (that means your time and attention)

Be interested and friendly toward those who are different from you

Step out of your comfort zone

Take time to notice who might be going through difficult times, even if they don't ask for your help.

*(If you feel it is the right time for your group, explain how Jesus is the friend who always cares, always understands, who is with us by his Holy Spirit, and who brings us into friendship with God. His 'circle' is always open).*