

ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER



1. List **five words** that describe loneliness.
2. How would you answer this? I feel most lonely when—
3. Natasha hung out on Friday night with three of her friends. She likes them and had fun—but she doesn't think she fits in that well. As she journaled that night, she wrote about how lonely she felt. **Why** do you think Natasha felt lonely?

What can she do about feeling lonely?

4. What do you think—**A (agree)** or **D (disagree)**?
 - ☐ Everyone gets lonely sometimes.
 - ☐ If someone is with other people, he or she won't be lonely.
 - ☐ If a person feels lonely, it's that person's fault.
 - ☐ If life were more exciting, young people wouldn't be lonely.
 - ☐ Jesus Christ felt lonely.
 - ☐ If you feel lonely when you're young, you'll be lonely for the rest of your life.
 - ☐ Adults get lonely more often than teenagers.
5. What do you **usually** do when you are lonely?

6. Read **2 Timothy 4:16-18**, and answer the questions below.
What do you think Paul felt?

Why do other people not always support us?

How do you think the Lord supported Paul?

ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER [loneliness]

THIS WEEK

Young people hear that the teenage years are the best years of their lives. But these years can be very lonely, even in the midst of the carefree fun. This TalkSheet offers your group the chance to talk about their lonely feelings, the causes and cures of loneliness, and how God can help.

OPEN

Before this session, you may want to ask your kids find examples or stories of loneliness—song lyrics, video clips, poems, stories from a magazine or book, and so on. Then read, play, or show these examples in the group. What message did each one give about loneliness? What words or characteristics about loneliness come to mind from each example? How was the person or artist feeling and why? How did he or she get over the loneliness, if at all? You may want to make a master list of these characteristics to refer to later.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Make a master list of all the words chosen. What word was most commonly chosen?
2. When do your kids feel most lonely? Why or why not?
3. This tension-getter will invite discussion about the difference between loneliness and being alone. Loneliness is usually a feeling inside oneself, perhaps of being misunderstood or unappreciated. There may be feelings of inferiority causing one to feel lonely, even when surrounded by people. Take some time to talk about loneliness in this context.
4. Discuss each of these statements with your group. Allow them to express their thoughts on each one. Take the time to discuss any disagreements. Tell them Christ also felt lonely (see Matthew 13:53-57; Mark 14:22,27,31,50; 15:1-34; and Luke 4:24-30).
5. Talk with your group about ways to cure loneliness. What do your kids do when they are lonely? How do people handle loneliness in different ways? Is that good or not so good?
6. Describe how Paul faced his loneliness. Ask your group if God can do the same for them as he did for Paul. You might also want to read Psalm 146.

THE CLOSE

God created us to be in close relationships with other people. They were created to live in families and in community with others. That's why it's important for us to build friendships and protect our relationships.

Christ experienced loneliness. You may want to read a few verses that show Christ being alone. He understands every emotion and every need. Your kids may feel lonely, but they aren't ever alone. Who can they turn to when they feel down? Encourage them to find one person who they know will encourage them—including you, their teacher, school counselor, or other adult.

MORE

- How do your kids handle alone time? Challenge them to spend a half hour (or more) of their time alone, away from everyone—no TV, Internet, radio, or any other distraction. Have them concentrate on being alone with themselves, just sitting, thinking, or praying. What was hard about being alone? What did they do to keep themselves occupied?
- You may want take time and talk about loneliness versus depression. There is an alarming rate of depression among Americans, including young people. Some of your kids may deal with depression—either with themselves, with a parent, or a sibling. Loneliness and depression are not the same thing. Make sure that your kids know the difference between being lonely and depression. Constant loneliness leads to depression, depression leads to withdrawal and further loneliness. Depression, although it varies person to person, is a chronic, emotional disorder with symptoms of mood swings and suicidal thoughts. For more information and links, check out www.depression.com or www.depression.about.com/health/depression/.