

## LONELINESS

Oh, Great Spirit,  
Merciful Caretaker,  
You are reflected  
    in the seasons.  
Life follows death in  
    a sacred cycle:  
day follows the night,  
as weeks turn into  
    months,  
and the months  
    into years.  
So goes the circle of life.

Mankind,  
    a bag of water,  
    a spec of dust in the wind,  
    a creature of Mother Earth,  
is not alone.  
The flowers,  
the trees,  
the fowls of the air  
and the animals of  
    the forest  
share a common destiny.  
Brothers and sisters  
are we all in the  
Sacred Circle.

Though alone,  
I am not lonely,  
you have provided things  
around me to comfort me.  
All I have to do is  
    to look around me,  
    see beauty all around me,  
to know that I am with  
all things, connected.

To feel alone  
is to deny  
Your grace,  
Your company.

No man is an island, entire of itself;  
every man is a piece of the continent,  
a part of the main. If a clod be washed  
away by the sea, Europe is the less, as  
well as if a promontory were, as well  
as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine  
own were: any man's death diminishes  
me, because I am involved in mankind,  
and therefore never send to know for  
whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne

What I ask for is absurd: that life  
shall have a meaning.

What I strive for is impossible: that  
my life shall acquire a meaning.

I dare not believe, I do not see how  
I shall ever be able to believe: that  
I am not alone.

Dag Hammarskjöld  
Markings

I AM NEVER ALONE; GOD IS ALWAYS WITH ME.

Never Alone

In a world of continual  
change and unfoldment,  
there is one constant truth on  
which I can depend: *I am never alone; God is  
always with me.*

Upon awakening in the morning, I feel the  
loving presence of God enfolding me. I release  
all anxiety about what this day may hold and  
listen for divine guidance as I plan my day.

If at any time during the day I feel confused  
or alone, I take a few moments to turn within  
and make connection with God's love and  
light. Reinforced and reassured, I proceed  
through every activity or responsibility with a  
sense of surety and poise. The knowledge of  
God's presence becomes like a thread woven  
through my every thought, feeling, and ac-  
tion, creating a tapestry of increasing beauty  
and goodness.

As I consider the day's events, I bless and  
release each one, knowing that God was with  
me every step of the way.

*"He who sent me is with me; he has not left me  
alone."*—John 8:29

John 16:32 - Jesus not alone because God with him

Go into any  
bar where  
single  
people hang  
out these  
days, and  
they tell you how  
scared they are and  
how isolated they feel.

Remember, we're all in this alone.  
— Lily Tomlin

GOD IS MY CONSTANT COMPANION.  
I AM NEVER ALONE.

Never  
Alone

There may be times in life when we feel alone and long to feel close to others. At these times, it is helpful to remember that God is our constant companion, that we are never alone. We can feel God's presence as we pray in faith and enfold all in God's care.

Though we may be miles apart from family or friends, within each of us and in that distance between there is a divine presence that joins us together in spirit. Prayer unites us as a spiritual family and helps us establish a closer relationship with God. As we take time to commune with God, we find that all our relationships are blessed, that our lives are enriched greatly. Let us establish an awareness of God as our constant companion who cares for us, who helps us in every needed way.

*For God alone my soul waits in silence;  
from him comes my salvation.  
He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved.*

—Psalms 62:1-2

## 'Alone' and 'Lonely' Are Not Synonymous

Men fear silence as they fear solitude, because both give them a glimpse of the terror of life's nothingness.

—André Maurois

### Babies die of loneliness

Babies are dying of loneliness because they've been banished to rooms of their own.

Keeping infants in the same room as their parents or even cuddled up in the same bed could cut the risk of crib deaths in half.

Parents who keep their newborn babies in separate rooms are making a big mistake, says child expert Dr. Wal of England's Bristol University.

I may not  
know much, but I know  
I don't want to be  
alone.

Pray that your loneliness  
may spur you into finding  
something to live for,  
great enough to die for.

Dag Hammarskjöld  
Markings

# ENCOURAGING THE LONELY

Ask a volunteer to sit in the center of the group circle. Invite the volunteer to complete this statement: *I feel loneliest when...*

After the volunteer has completed the statement, give each group member an opportunity to respond to the volunteer's completed statement with a way to cope with the lonely situation named by the volunteer. Repeat with other volunteers.

## Face CONFESSIONS

After you have completed the activity Behind the Faces

- In this game, who felt liked? accepted? popular? How were these people treated?
- Who felt lonely? shunned? unaccepted? unpopular? How were these people treated?
- When in our day-to-day lives do we feel the most lonely?
- What's the difference between being alone and feeling lonely?
- When is being alone okay? When does being alone feel lonely?
- When do we feel lonely, even in a group?
- Why do people experience loneliness?
- Respond to this statement: *Everyone experiences loneliness.* To what degree is this statement true?

## JeSUS ALONE

Ask:

- When do you think Jesus felt the loneliest?
- When do we feel lonely?
- When do our parents experience loneliness? our teachers? our friends?
- In what ways can we overcome loneliness?
- How can Jesus help us?
  - What example did Jesus set for us in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-36)?
  - Who is present with us, even when family and friends are not?

Distribute **paper** and **pencils** and invite group members to write prayers that ask God for help in overcoming loneliness.

## BEHIND THE FaCeS

Before the meeting prepare **slips of paper on which you have written roles**. Write one role on each sheet. Suggested roles include: beauty queen, jock, rebel, nerd, Casanova/playboy, flirt, smart Einstein type, someone with AIDS, politician, homeless person, wealthy person, druggie, elderly person, musician, Hare Krishna, drug dealer, prostitute, ex-convict, physically challenged person, etc. Add other **roles of your own** and feel free to repeat roles, if necessary, to be sure you have prepared **one** role for each participant.

As each group member arrives, **pin** to his or her back one of the role slips prepared before the meeting. Be certain that members do not see the roles being pinned to their backs. Give these instructions: Treat each person in the group according to his or her role. Try to guess from the way people treat you what is written on your back.