

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Loneliness” the High School Sunday school lesson for March 11, 2018. The lesson is found on page 11 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

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Everywhere you look you can find experts talking, writing, and thinking about the epidemic of this generation. The flu? No. AIDS? No. Drug addiction? No.

Loneliness. Teens today are more connected in some ways than they ever have been—they can gain “Insta” reactions from thousands of “friends” faster than you can say Snapchat. But are their social network friends the same as well, just friends? The General Social Survey found in 2017 that the number of people living in America who claimed to have no close friends had tripled since 1985. Interestingly, another study found that loneliness is, in a way, contagious. People who have other people in their lives who are lonely are 52% more likely to be lonely themselves.

And the Internet seems to be helping this contagion go completely, globally viral. Why? Because the way we often seek to soothe our loneliness actually only helps to feed it. What do you do when you’re feeling sad and alone? Go online. Find other sad, alone people. Or find a funny cat video. Or comment on someone’s blog. As writer David Brooks put it, the Internet provides a “day of happy touch points.” So our self-medication may really only be a way to further social isolation.

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the article. Then discuss in this way:

What do you think about this article? Do you think loneliness is contagious? Why or why not?

Talk about the good or positive feelings you have with interactions with people online. What benefits do you see?

Do you agree that the Internet could be in a way making loneliness go viral? Explain your opinion.

We all feel lonely at times. It’s how we deal with loneliness that makes a difference. Today we’ll look at one of the psalms and see what is revealed about God through the writer’s feelings on loneliness.