



ELEVATE: Conversation About Suicide Resources for Parents

Helpful video to help you navigate conversation about suicide with your teenager:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Svur6CtGMJY>

SPRING 2023	High School	PE
Elevate: Raising the bar on Conversations about Suicide Discussing some topics with your teenager can feel really complicated. One of those is suicidal thoughts. This week, we'll elevate the conversation about suicide, by looking at an option we all have when facing dark and difficult thoughts: choosing hope today and life tomorrow. MEMORY VERSE "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18, NIV		
Week One John 10:10 Psalm 34:18 Choose hope today and life tomorrow.		
High School ENGAGE IN EVERYDAY MOMENTS TOGETHER		
Morning Time As your teen starts their day, let them know a way that have made your life so much better simply by being who they are. Their Time Let your teen know that if they or a friend of theirs is in trouble, they don't have to figure things out by themselves—you are available to help too, and can help them navigate any situation.		
Meal Time At a meal this week, have everyone answer this: "Tell us about a time when you were going through something difficult, and someone said or did something that gave you hope that things would get better." Bed Time Pray that both you and your teen will have safe people in your lives when life gets overwhelming, and that you both will never forget that there is always hope—even when we can't see it.		
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CHOOSE HOPE TODAY AND LIFE TOMORROW.

You are a big deal. You matter.

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27 NLT

Your life is important, even if you don't think it is.

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9 NLT

You're not alone, even if you think you are.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.

Psalms 34:18-19 NLT

You have something to contribute to the world.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 2:10 NLT

You make the world a better place.

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Matthew 5:14-16 NLT

What others have said about you does not define your value. God does.

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!
Psalms 139:1-6 NLT

God gave you value when He thought you up and created you.

for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.
Colossians 1:16 NLT

You can get through this, even when it feels like you can't.

I cried out, "I am slipping!" but your unfailing love, O Lord, supported me. When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer.
Psalms 94:18-19 NLT

Conversation about Suicide Message- April 21, 2023

CHOOSE HOPE TODAY AND LIFE TOMORROW.

INTRODUCTION

ICE BREAKER GROUP DISCUSSION:

Have you ever had a random thought run through your mind, then right after that, thought,, "Whoa, where did that come from?" Share a random thought you had recently. It could be a funny or deep thought.

We all have random thoughts that run through our mind, then right after that, thought,,
For example, I recently wondered,

Why are blackboards not black.

At a movie theater, which armrest is yours?

Why are killer whales, not called killer dolphins?

Now, what if I were to somehow create a device that could monitor your brain activity 24/7, which would certainly be creepy and weird, somewhere along the way I imagine I'd find some pretty dark thoughts! How do I know? Because we all have them!

Today, we're going to spend some time discussing one of the darkest and most desperate thoughts a person can have—suicidal thoughts.

Personal testimony of wrestling through suicidal thoughts as a freshmen in high school.

I know, I know...we're getting pretty heavy today. It might even feel weird to talk about this at church, but hang with me. At your age, you're surrounded by people, often hurting people. And there may be a time when you or someone you care about is feeling a deep sense of despair or hopelessness. So, we wanted to take some time & talk through it together. *Or maybe you don't have someone in your life who have experience this type of hopelessness before,. We want to talk about it ahead of time.*

But this really *IS* some heavy stuff, so before we get started, I'd love to pray for us.

Prayer:

God, help us to love one another the way You love us. As we tackle this tough topic, please give us insight on how to handle the challenges of life and support one another. For those who feel like living is just too hard right now, will you please help them find peace and give them strength? For those who are walking with friends who may be in a battle, would you give them words to say and eyes to see the hurt? You have told us that nothing can separate us from You and Your love. So please remind us of just how close you really are no matter what we're carrying. In Jesus' Name, amen.

TENSION

Like we said before, **every person has strange thoughts from time to time**. Just about every person I know has thought about what it would be like if they were dead. The first time you think about it, it totally freaks you out. But the 100th time, it seems totally normal. This is what's so scary about suicide. The people who do it have become comfortable with the idea of being dead. They didn't start thinking about it the day they seriously considered taking their life. Most of the time, they've been processing the idea for a long time. As time went on, and nothing interrupted their thinking, it simply became more and more normal.

The idea that the world would move on without them, or even be a better place, feels hopeless.

Which makes sense, right? What hope could any of us hang on to if the thought of us being dead and gone seems like it would make the world better?

For some people, believing they should die when they feel depressed or discouraged becomes normal. There's nothing unusual about it when they've been thinking about it over and over.

Give any thought enough time and repetition in an isolated brain, and eventually it will become comfortable there.

If someone isn't careful, a thought as extreme as, "I should take myself out of this world" can feel surprisingly rational.

But here's what you need to know. It's not rational. It may be normal to have that thought every once in a while, but it is NOT rational to let it go that far. Maybe that's you, and no one around you knows it. Maybe you've never even realized that thinking about it has become normal to you. But if you were honest, you'd admit that the idea has been popping in your brain more and more, and suddenly it doesn't seem as

extreme as it once did. In fact, hearing me say this may not even impact you all that much. If that's you, or you know someone else who has normalized this kind of thinking, please listen carefully to what we're talking about.

PAUSE FOR QUESTION:

What is your experience with irrational thoughts?

Take a couple of moments to reflect silently on thoughts that can sometimes get stuck in your head. How do those thoughts make you feel? How do you deal with them?

TRUTH

When someone is considering suicide, it means there are certain things they have forgotten about themselves or never knew about themselves in the first place.

Here's what I mean . . . Most people who consider suicide. . .

- Can't imagine contributing anything worthwhile to the world.
- Have convinced themselves that the solution is gone forever.
- Feel like the pain is constant.

In other words, they can't see that their life has value.

And they feel worthless, even when everyone around them knows that isn't true. Everyone around them may be able to see the worth they have, but they can't.

That's what makes suicidal thoughts so tricky.

If I were to talk about this in language the Bible uses, I would say that someone dealing with suicidal thoughts has been robbed of their ability to see their own worth and value.

Here's what I mean. . . In the book of John in the New Testament, Jesus said this:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10a NIV).

This "thief" that Jesus mentions does something very specific. The thief tries to . . .

- Steal our joy.
- Kill our hope.
- Destroy the life God gave us.

If this goes on for too long without interruption, the thief can steal a lot! In fact, you or someone you know can even feel like you're caught in a trap...

- You can't imagine the pain ever stopping.
- You can't imagine ever feeling happy again.
- You can't imagine living a life that makes a difference in the world.

Maybe the inner dialogue sounds like this: "All I need to do is kill myself and my problems and pain will be over, and I won't be a burden to other people." If that thought makes sense to you or someone else, it may mean your ability to experience joy, hope, or your ability to see yourself as valuable is running low.

Your problems feel forever. So, giving up on life now seems like an option that makes sense. Here's what you can remember:

Don't make a permanent decision because of a temporary problem.

Think of it this way: **When we can't see the truth, lies start to make sense.** We start to follow the lies. We start to do what they say. We let them *lead* us. And that's a problem because. . . well, they're lies.

When we believe them and act on them, we can end up missing out on so much.

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Think of a time when you might have been led to believe a lie. This could be a lie that you told yourself and internalized like "I am not smart enough," or a lie that another person told you. How did believing that lie make you feel?

Today, I want you to hear the truth.

There is a God who created you & who loves you more than you'll ever understand.
A God who wants so much for you & your life—who created you to experience love & peace & joy & friends & so many things that we can miss out on when we believe lies over the truth.

Here's another TRUTH that we can absolutely use to combat the LIES.
Jesus continues in John chapter 10 in response to what the thief comes to do and He says:

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10b NIV).

Think about it. **Jesus wants you to have life.** THAT is the truth.

Jesus, who was present at the creation of the entire world, wants YOU to live.

Jesus wants you to live.

Jesus places enormous value on your life and life IS what He wants for you.
Anything else, any message different than that, is a lie that can steal from you, kill you, or destroy you.

But even better, Jesus doesn't just want you to have a life.

He wants you to have a full life!

He wants you to have more than enough!

He wants you to have a life that is so remarkable and full that it's uncommon!

A life that people look at and wonder, "What makes your life so different?"

But that might feel so far off for some of you today because. . .

- If you believe that you don't have worth, you are believing a lie, and not living the full life God wants for you.
- If you believe that the world is better off without you, your value has been stolen from you, and you aren't living a full life.
- If you believe the pain will never get better, it's not the truth.
- If the difficulty of life seems like it will always be too much to handle, it's not true.

- If you believe that no one will ever totally understand you or what you are going through, Jesus does.

The lies may feel true. But that doesn't mean they are. It's not what Jesus has in store for you. Jesus came to give back what the lies have tried to steal!

He wants to give you a full life. He wants to restore your hope.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:28-29

THE AWESOME TRUTH:

Jesus invites us to come to him and give to Him our weariness, our burdens and concerns us, into his hands and Jesus promise says that he will give you rest and rest in our souls! There's no hurt too big, no heaviness that's too heavy for him to carry with you. Jesus wants us to not just experience a full life, but He promises to do life with you, and not only that, when we come to him in prayer, He gives us rest in our souls! That's great news!

He wants you to have a life that is better than anything you could ever ask for or imagine! One that is full of the hope that your life can be full. So..

CHOOSE HOPE TODAY AND LIFE TOMORROW.

Does this mean you're never going to hear the lies again or feel them? Probably not. But you don't have to give them power. You don't have to replay them or do what they say. And you can choose to replay truths instead.

Today, I want to challenge you with this:

Let hope lead you.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

TRUTH SCRIPTURES HANDOUT. *Let's take a moment in our group to read out these truths together. Please share one scripture with your group that gives you a sense of hope. Please share what that Scripture means to you and how it could help you silence the lie(s). How could your life be different if you were to believe this truth?*

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G4oYzWdr-8CsdbVAe_CFi_pcFHgbPSP7VToesVkfWPI/edit?usp=s_haring

- You are a big deal. You matter. (Genesis 1:27)
- Your life is important, even if you don't think it is. (1 Peter 2:9)
- You're not alone, even if you think you are. (Psalm 34:18-19)
- You have something to contribute to the world. (Ephesians 2:10)
- You make the world a better place. (Matthew 5:14-16)
- What others have said about you does not define your value. God does. (Psalm 139:1-6)
- God gave you value when He thought you up and created you. (Colossians 1:16)
- You can get through this, even when it feels like you can't. (Psalm 94:18-19)

APPLICATION

Lies may sound like "This will last forever" or "you'll always feel this way." But that is a lie. I wish you could flip a switch that makes the lies easy to spot and truths easy to follow. I wish it was a one-time decision. But it isn't. Just like it took time for the lies to become normal thinking, it will take time for the truth to become normal, too. Repeat those truths on a regular basis. Write them down somewhere and start your day by taking two minutes to repeat them. Start speaking and repeating the truth now as a way to let hope lead you.

Now, I don't want you to miss this, based on everything we've discussed there is one *really* important thing to do today:

- **Talk to someone.** Start now!

If you've been having suicidal thoughts even if you don't think you would act on them, I want you to start talking to a trusted adult today. It can be your small group leader, your parent, counselor, teacher. But it needs to be today. I know your mind is already giving you all the reasons you shouldn't or can't do that, but don't let those lies lead you.

If the thought of talking to an adult makes you nervous, text a trusted adult or friend, or grab a friend to go with you. I know some of you are downplaying your thoughts right now and thinking, "It's not that bad," or "I don't have that thought often enough to have to say anything."

Please don't shrug this off. It's time to talk to someone.

You are too important to fight this battle alone.

For those of us who aren't struggling with suicidal thoughts, we can talk to someone too. Find a trusted adult or professional to take your questions to and be brutally honest about how you're feeling.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Who is someone that you would feel comfortable talking to if you are having a hard time choosing hope right now?

Okay, there's one more important thing to mention . . .

Sometimes there is a mental or chemical block that can keep you from hearing the truth and believing it. It's something you can't control or fix on your own no matter how hard you try. In the long run, you may need to talk to a **doctor** or a **counselor**. That's okay. It might be part of the solution. God uses doctors and counselors to help us heal. Just like you go to a doctor when you're physically sick, sometimes we need to see someone who can help us get our minds healthy. God has a full life in mind for you, and if getting to that full life means talking to a professional, that's totally okay!

Help is available:

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Dial 988

SMS: 988

Crisis Text Line

Text ALOHA to 741-741

Trained Crisis Counselor will respond to you (> 85% in under 5mins)

When you decide you want to experience the full life Jesus talks about, it will be a journey to get there. It may feel like one step forward and two steps back.

It may take time. The process might sting a little bit at times or require you to talk about hurtful things you've never shared before. It may even take prescribed medicine. No matter what steps are ahead, the first step is one you can take today by talking to someone who can help you.

LANDING

Today is the beginning of an on-going conversation. There is so much more to discuss and learn. There's way more to this topic than we've been able to cover right now. If you find yourself having more questions, talk to your small group leader, me, a parent, or any adult you trust. This isn't a topic to stay bottled up. Whether you believe that or not, do something today and tell somebody if the thought of being gone has become normal to you. We love you right where you are, but we don't want you to be there alone.

Remember, **CHOOSE HOPE TODAY AND LIFE TOMORROW.**