Can a Screen Be a Real Friend?

Useful tools, people who matter

Ages about 7-11 | Video 5:44 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth In a fictional town, Eli keeps a place for people to listen, apologize, and care for one another instead of replacing them with digital helpers.

Learning goals Children will distinguish a useful tool from a person, recall Eli's table and family apology, and practice attentive listening.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask: What can a screen help us do? What care needs a real person? Explain that this is an imaginative story, not a report about a real town.

Watch and notice

Notice the disappearing tables, Eli listening to his daughter, her brother's apology, and the invitation to neighbors.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. How were the helpers useful?
They answered questions, found recipes, and organized tasks. The story keeps them as tools.

2. What did Eli notice about his daughter?
She needed to be heard by her family, not simply receive a smooth answer.

3. What could her brother do that mattered?
Listen, acknowledge hurt, and say he was sorry. An apology belongs to the person who caused the hurt.

4. How could you make space for someone today?
Ask about their day, listen without interrupting, invite them into a safe activity, or seek trusted adult help.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

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Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw Eli's table, then a moment of listening with a real person.

Read & Write Recall the apology, identify a useful tool task, and plan time for human connection.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: practice taking turns listening with a familiar adult.

Ages 9-11: compare helpful digital answers with human responsibility, presence, and repair.

Two minutes of listening | Optional 4 minutes

With a partner, take turns describing a favorite activity for one minute. The listener puts devices aside, listens, and recalls one detail. Ask permission before sharing anything personal; invite passing.

Look for understanding Children explain that tools may help people connect but cannot take a person's place or apologize on someone else's behalf.

Closing prayer Jesus, help us see the people beside us. Teach us to listen, apologize, and use our tools with care. Amen.

At home Choose a short device-free conversation or shared activity with a trusted adult. Accessibility tools may stay available.

Handout answer notes Tools: questions, recipes, reminders. Repair: he acknowledged hurt and apologized. Plans: real attention and safe human connection.

Teach with care

Preview the lonely older woman and the child feeling unseen. Offer private adult support if loneliness is personal; do not ask children to disclose private conversations. This is a fictional reflection about technology and human relationships. It is not a prediction or a ban on screens. Online communication can support real friendships; AI-generated companionship does not replace human care. Children should seek trusted adults for worries and keep private information private.

Words to explain Tool: something people use to help with a task. Friendship: care between real people. Apology: admitting a wrong and working to repair it.

Sources for the leader

Story source: Servus Dei video and English subtitle

Catholic reflection: Antiqua et nova: AI and human relationships - Vatican