

Making Connections . . .

The poor and vulnerable are often invisible. Sometimes it takes a tragedy, such as a heat wave, to open our eyes to the suffering of the vulnerable, such as the poor and elderly. Christians have the responsibility to reach out to people who suffer.

WITH SCIENCE

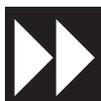
Hot weather can be a dangerous thing. The National Weather Service reports in *U.S.A. Today*, May 15, 2005, that it considers heat to be the leading weather-related cause of death. Research the scientific aspects of a heat wave. Use the Internet and other resources. Find out what causes these severe weather events. Work with science specialists to learn what factors made the July 1995 event in the United States so severe. Define and describe how factors, such as the urban heat islands, temperature inversion, air stagnation, pollutants, humidity, and the heat index contributed to the heat wave of July 1995. Contact a meteorologist at your local weather station to find out how meteorologists forecast heat waves. Share what you find out with your class.

WITH SOCIAL STUDIES

Research the Web site of the Department of Health and Human Service's Administration on Aging (<http://www.aoa.gov/>) to find out facts about the elderly population in our country. Using the resources on the Web site, answer the questions on the handout, "The Elderly in Our Country." Then interview local government officials and community service providers to find out what kinds of services are available for older people. Share what you find out with your class.

WITH LANGUAGE ARTS

Look up three news articles related to the July 1995 Chicago heat wave. You can find articles by searching the Internet. First prepare an oral summary of the articles. Then create a persuasive presentation on the need to have a safety network for the elderly during a heat wave. Present your argument to the class.



Faith Action

Make a special effort to checkup on someone in your neighborhood, parish, or community who is lonely and isolated.