

Engaged Citizenship | **EMPATHY**
THE WALKING DEAD: PLAYER IMPACT GUIDE

Age 14+ | 1+ Hours

“All we do is think about how a person is going to experience a moment any second of a game, but I don’t actually think about people playing it.”

-- Sean Vanaman, *Walking Dead* episode writer, *The Walking Dead*


ABOUT THE WALKING DEAD

The Walking Dead puts the player in the shoes of Lee Everett, a man recently arrested for murder. Lee's life is turned upside down when he gets in a car crash and discovers that dead people have started to come alive. With the world entering a zombie apocalypse, Lee must do what he can to survive. For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/LHH6v9>

THEME FOR THIS GUIDE: Empathy

In *The Walking Dead*, the player is thrust into the world of Lee Everett, a man accused of murdering his wife's lover. On the way to the station, the police car Lee is in is forced off the side of the road only to crash into a ditch. Lee wakes up to find the officer dead and now he must find help. Though the game's story takes place in a zombie apocalypse, the game's main focus is empathy, which is the ability to not only understand the feelings of another but to also feel with them on a deeper level. With this game's character development, the player can immerse themselves in the emotions and hard decisions that Lee Everett must make in order to survive. Who you empathize with is up to you, and the characters will remember it forever.

WHY USE THIS GUIDE?	<p>In this guide, we invite you to think about empathy and how <i>The Walking Dead</i> game allows you to practice this emotional skill. How does empathy apply to our daily lives? What exactly makes up empathy, and why is it important to empathize with others?</p> <p><i>Answer the questions below and add up your points when you are finished!</i></p>
GAME BASICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play through several minutes. What decisions do you make regarding your character’s actions? [+1] • Make a decision to lie or tell the truth. What is the consequence of that action in terms of another character’s outlook? [+2] • Continue playing until you connect with a few others. What happens when the characters are in dire situations? What action choices do you have? [+2] • Finish season one: episode one. What did you learn about your choices from the player statistics? [+3]
THEME INSIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does knowledge about the character’s likes, dislikes, skills, and personality affect the decisions you make along the way? [+1] • The game begins by positioning Lee as an antihero, but as you play, do you begin to identify with and develop compassion for Lee? Why or why not? [+2] • How do the characters and story in <i>The Walking Dead</i> create situations for the player to experiment with tough decision-making and the impact on others? [+2] • Did you play in a way that reflects your personality? Why or why not? [+3]
WORLD CONNECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this game you were able to decide what kinds of responses Lee would have. How did your choices reflect your empathy (or lack of it)? What does empathy look like in action in our world? [+1] • In <i>The Walking Dead</i> when you met Clementine you had the option to protect her from the truth or reveal a harsh reality about the fate of her parents to her. Why is this emotional skill important to develop and practice? [+2] • There were many opportunities to empathize with the characters in <i>The Walking Dead</i> through action or speech. When do you empathize with people in the real world? [+2] • Imagine what the game would feel like if you never made the empathetic choice. Now what would the world look like without empathy? [+3]

Bonus Challenge: *The Walking Dead* has multiple episodes. Play season 1 episode 2 and record a video discussing your play experience and the choices you made. Include your statistics screen from the end of the episode. Share the link on the Center for Games & Impact Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/gamesandimpact>.