

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Valentine’s Day. It either gives you butterflies in your stomach or indigestion. You either thrill at the thought of roses, chocolates, and sentimental hearts or you’d rather crawl into a hole and pretend the whole day never existed. But genuine expressions of love don’t have to come on a certain day or be wrapped with a big red bow. Just ask the teens in Upper Deerfield Township, New Jersey. Or better yet, ask the people in their lives.

Each year, students in the mentoring program at Cumberland Regional High School gather in the school library to thank the people who have made a difference to each of them. Students write letters to their role models and heroes, thanking them for the support, guidance, and understanding they’ve provided.

“You are the kindest person I have ever known. You’re like a light that guides people to good choices,” wrote one girl about her mother.

“You go out of your way for your family so you can put a smile on everybody’s face,” said a young man to his grandfather.

“I’ve always looked up to you,” said one girl to her youth leader. “I just haven’t had the courage or opportunity to tell you.”

“Not only have you given me a roof over my head and food to eat,” wrote a boy to his father, “you have also given me something that money can’t buy: love, affection, and a great dad.”

And to an elderly couple that isn’t even related to him, one young man wrote, “I am extremely grateful for your involvement in my life. If I were asked what I appreciate most about you, my answer would simply be your love.”

Role Model Day is only a small part of the mentoring program at the school. Seniors are matched with incoming freshmen to provide motivation, accountability, and assistance with schoolwork. According to Assistant Principal Terence Johnson, “The main thing is academics but character carries over into everything. Character carries over into getting involved in activities, getting good grades, and staying out of trouble. It’s not a behavior class. The number one goal is to instill character and have the transition [into high school] be smooth, so there is a carryover into everything.”

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

Would you like to see a mentoring program like this at your school? Why or why not?

Who has impacted your life in a meaningful way? What would you say to that person?

Why is it important to have someone to look up to?

Do people look up to you as a role model or leader? Why or why not?

We *all* have the potential to influence other people—in good ways and bad. Let’s see what Paul said to Timothy about the kind of influence that we as Christians should try to have.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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