

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Healing Hating Hearts,” the High School Sunday school lesson for June 28, 2015. The lesson is found on page 23 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

# the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

“The Power of Love” was the theme for this week’s Bible study at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC. Just seven days after a gunman killed nine people during a Bible study in the church basement, approximately 150 people gathered to worship, mourn, and heal.

The week before, 21-year-old Dylann Roof came to the church and joined the Bible study. He was there for an hour before turning on his victims, declaring he was there “to kill black people.” Since then, several friends and family members of the nine people murdered have publicly forgiven Dylann for his crimes. He has confessed to the killings, been charged with nine counts of murder, and will likely face federal hate crime charges as well. When asked to explain his actions, Dylann replied, “We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the Internet. Well, someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.”

“Bible study will continue,” Interim Pastor Norvel Goff Sr. told the congregation. “But because of what happened, we will never be the same.” The very room in which they met was evidence of that. Ceiling tiles had been replaced. One tile was still missing. One contained a bullet hole with a police ID number. Flowers filled the room. Music played softly. An armed Charleston police officer stood watch.

Goff spoke about forgiveness and healing, saying, “God is with us, with you—and God gives us the ability to let it go.” Referring to the hatred displayed in that very room last week, he added, “We are better than that.”

As he concluded the service, Goff sang the simple childhood hymn, “Jesus Loves Me.”

“This is not the end. We will see our loved ones again,” he added.

*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:*

**What do you think causes young people like Dylann Roof to have such intense hatred?**

**What are some of the emotional and physical effects of hatred?**

**What other problems in our world seem to be caused by unresolved hatred?**

**The fruits of anger and hatred can often be seen in our society. Jesus talked about hatred and how His followers should react to it.**



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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