

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Take Time for God,” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for June 28, 2015. The lesson is found on page 23 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



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:

Why is it important to the church members to continue their Bible study?

How does their faith impact their lives?

How do you think their example impacts the community of Charleston?

Meeting together to worship and study God’s Word is a priority to those who attend Bible study at Emmanuel AME Church. It’s a healthy habit. It brings good things into their lives, even in the midst of tragedy. God himself told the Jews to develop one specific healthy habit to improve their lives. We will see in Scripture that even today we are blessed by following this same habit.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

©2015 Encounter Curriculum. Written by Karen Cain. Copies may be made for classroom use only. Not for resale.

<http://www.encounterface2face.com/category/the-scene/>