

Use “The Scene” to introduce “The Thief on the Cross,” the High School Sunday school lesson for October 25, 2015. The lesson is found on page 49 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

When 26-year-old Hesham fled Syria in August, he had every hope of finding a new and better life in Germany for himself, his pregnant wife, and their baby. But that hope turned to despair after weeks of waiting outside an overcrowded reception center in Berlin. More than 200,000 refugees arrived in Germany in September alone. With 1.5 million asylum seekers expected this year, Germany is facing a refugee crisis unlike any other. “I wish I’d stayed in Syria and not come here,” Hesham (a former chef) explained through an interpreter. “I dreamed Germany would be better but it’s so bad. We’ve been sleeping in the cold. Now my baby is sick.”

Germany has the largest economy in Europe, making it a logical place to flee for people trying to escape civil war, conflicts, and poverty. People from the Middle East, Africa, and beyond are pouring across the borders at an unprecedented rate. “Berlin used to receive between 1,500 and 2,000 asylum seekers a year. But at the moment, that’s the number of refugees arriving every single day,” according to Mario Czaja, the social affairs manager for Berlin.

And Berlin is not the only area being affected. At the beginning of October, some 42,000 refugees were sleeping in tent-cities across Germany, waiting for a home. In Hamburg alone, 4,000 people are currently sleeping in unheated tents. Many have taken to the streets to protest their living conditions. “It has become a health problem,” says Red Cross spokesperson Kai Kranich. “We have distributed all the sleeping bags and blankets that we have but they are not enough.” Sports gyms, exhibition halls, and wooden sheds have been turned into temporary housing. But as more and more people arrive in Germany as winter approaches, tensions are rising.

“They [the asylum seekers] go on strike because they don’t like the accommodation[s] and they cause trouble because they don’t like the food. They beat each other,” says Internal Minister Thomas de Maiziere. According to Germany’s top-selling newspaper, authorities are concerned about keeping up with the demand for housing and sanitary facilities. They also worry that those who are granted legal asylum will bring their families to Germany too, creating the challenge of tracking down and sending back the thousands of refugees who were not granted asylum or never registered to begin with. The crisis has turned into a nightmare for police, politicians, and the refugees.

“They say they are going to do something,” said a 25-year-old Afghan man living in one of Hamburg’s tents, “but they are not telling us what. Maybe we are all going to turn to ice.”

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 do you think the refugees are so angry? Do you think they have a right to be?

Can you think of a time when you’ve been angry recently? What other emotions did you feel?

Many times anger is a result of feeling hurt. It is very hard to forgive people who have hurt us. It is easier to hold a grudge and be unkind to them. Jesus has a very different style. He is willing to forgive anyone who has been unkind to Him—in fact He does it over and over again. Let’s take a look at Jesus forgiving a man convicted of a capital crime.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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