

Use “The Scene” to introduce “The Call to Purity” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for March 20, 2016. The lesson is found on page 17 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

By now you’ve probably heard the story or at least seen a headline that mentions the problem with the drinking water in Flint, Michigan. Some late-night comedians have even made jokes about it. But when kids are hurt, it’s not even a little funny.

The problem with the water in Flint isn’t so much a story about the water itself—though that was definitely part of the problem. But it wasn’t like some company was dumping pollutants into the water. There was no oil spill. There was no sewage treatment scandal. The problem with the water wasn’t something in the natural water—it was what happened when the water reacted with the containers it was put in.

Flint’s water was highly corrosive. That means it would attack the metal in the pipes it ran through, dissolving the metal—in this case, iron and lead—into the water. Flint’s water was a natural product made impure, actually poisoned, by its contact with manmade systems.

It’s not unlike many other things God has provided for us—gifts of nature that have been poisoned by contact with humankind. Gifts that have become things that hurt instead of bless. Water, air, earth, food, our bodies, our natural desires, our sexuality. Sexual immorality has become such a regular part of our daily newsfeed, we don’t even blink when we see it. Late-night comedians make lots of jokes about it. But when kids continue to get hurt by the gift of sexuality used in the wrong systems, outside the framework God created—it’s not even a little funny.

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:

How would you describe the difference between pure and impure water? Make a list of some of the qualities of each.

How would you describe the difference between a pure and impure relationship? Make a list of some of the qualities of each.

The residents of Flint could have been protected by the addition of an anti-corrosive agent to their water. It would have stopped the water from eating away at the pipes. Sexual desire can be hard to ignore. If out of control, it can eat away at relationships and destroy your own character. What can you add to your life to help protect yourself and your relationships?

We want clothing, windows, food, medicine, and our environments to be clean and pure. But it goes deeper than that. Let’s look at three ways that Joseph guarded his purity against an appealing temptation.