

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Cleopas—Finding Hope” the High School Sunday school lesson for April 10, 2016. The lesson is found on page 37 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

By now you’ve probably heard at least some bit of the excitement over the NCAA men’s basketball championship game played on this past Monday. And if you haven’t, perhaps you are actually living under a rock (I hear it’s eco-friendly).

It was a tie game with 4.7 seconds left on the clock. Villanova’s star senior, Ryan Arcidiacono, got the ball. Now most guys in his position would have just taken that shot. Why not try to be the game’s hero? But Ryan didn’t do that.

Something you may not know about Ryan, especially if you are living under the aforementioned rock, is that Ryan and his coach have a special bond. In a *USA Today* article from March 21 of this year, Nicole Auerbach reported Coach Wright’s thoughts on his star player: “Everything he does is what I do. Everything he thinks about is what I think about.”

So when Ryan passed that ball away from personal glory and into the hands of a more open player (Kris Jenkins) who made the winning three-pointer, his coach had no doubt that Ryan knew what he was doing. And Ryan had no doubt that what he was doing was right for his team. It’s what he’d been doing all along. Trusting his coach’s voice. Believing in his team. And living up to the hope they had in him.

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:

So many thoughts and emotions can go through a person’s mind when put in a high-drama, high-stress situation like a championship game. If you had been in Ryan’s shoes, what do you think you would have done? Would you have wanted that shot for yourself? Would you have trusted your teammate? Why or why not?

Think about a time when you really hoped for something that did not come true, or a time when you really trusted someone who then disappointed you. What caused you to have hope or to trust that person? Can you look back and see any clues you might have had about what was going to happen in the end?

Villanova certainly hoped to win that final game of the season, and that hope turned into reality. But that hope was built on many hundreds of hours of experience with one another and with their coach. What could help you decide whether or not the hope you can have in Jesus is based on reality? How can you trust His Word? Can He trust you?

Today we are going to read about a man whose hopes were crushed when Jesus died on the cross. But we’ll also find out what happened that caused his doubts and hopeless feelings to turn to joy.