

Use “The Scene” to introduce “No Consequences?” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for May 22, 2016. The lesson is found on page 75 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

The show 60 Minutes recently featured a story that highlighted the dramatic increase in earthquakes in Oklahoma over the last several years. Before 2009, Oklahomans experienced around two earthquakes per year. Last year, they made it through 907.

The cause is disputed, but most voices weighing in on the subject think the problem has something to do with the wastewater (extremely salty water that isn't considered good for anything) that is pumped out with gas and oil and then injected back into the earth, into a porous layer deep down called the Arbuckle. This layer can accommodate the extra water—no problem. The problem is that this layer sits on top of another layer that contains lots of faults. The water pressure causes water to push into these cracks deep in the earth, spreading them apart and causing earthquakes to be felt back up on the surface.

Oil and gas is the biggest industry in Oklahoma. And when the price of oil shot up back in 2008, production increased. Now that the price has dropped dramatically, production is still increasing in order to make up for the loss in value. And slowing down doesn't seem to be an option.

It's a manmade problem with sometimes devastating consequences for the people whose homes have been literally shaken apart in some of the stronger quakes. But the manmade solution is proving difficult to find. It was just some yucky water—who'd have thought it could rock people's world?

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above story to read. Then discuss it in this way:

What stands out to you about this story of unexpected consequences? If the people who were pumping out oil and gas back before 2009 could have been told that their actions would result in a sharp increase in earthquakes, do you think they would have changed anything? Explain your answer.

Think for a minute about all the different ways people might be affected by having to live with an ever-present risk of earthquakes. How would this change your life?

Think of a time when something you did resulted in a negative effect that you did not expect. What did you do about it? How did it impact your actions or decisions afterward?

All actions have consequences. We know that there are blessings from obedience and negative consequences from sin. Let's read the story of Achan and see how he underestimated the seriousness of sin against God's commands.