

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Get a New Boss” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for September 25, 2016. The lesson is found on page 23 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



“He had a gun,” the police said. “He had a book,” his daughter said.

Either way, he’s gone.

Once again, violent protests have erupted in an American city over the shooting of a citizen. Police had come to an apartment complex in Charlotte, North Carolina to serve a warrant on a tenant there with a warrant. A father of seven (and not the man the police were looking for), Keith Lamont Scott, was sitting in his car at the time the police arrived. The police say they saw this African-American man get out of a car with a gun, then he went back into the car. Officers moved in and the man got back out of the car armed with a firearm. That was when he was shot and killed. The officer who shot the man was also African-American.

This is just one of dozens of similar stories that have been in the news in recent months. And like many of those stories, it’s very hard to know the actual facts of the case. It’s hard to imagine being in the shoes of police officers anywhere in the U.S. these days—when the tension between police and African-American communities keeps rising. It’s perhaps easier to imagine the anxiety, fear, and confusion among the people who feel their family members, friends, and neighbors are under attack.

Yet both sides feel targeted. In these most recent protests, so far twelve officers have been injured. Videos show people damaging a police car, setting fires on the highway, and throwing things at officers. Police in turn hurl tear gas at the protesters. And a nation watches and wonders, what happened? Who’s in charge? Can we trust them? Which side is telling the truth?

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

What do you think when you hear stories like this one? How does such a story make you feel?

Police officers in general are trained to make good judgments about when to use lethal force and we should trust their authority in making these decisions. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.

Do you think people should have the right to protest authority figures? Why or why not?

It’s not very likely that many of us would be involved in tense conflicts with police officers, but we may find ourselves in conflict with other types of authority in our lives. Many of us have trouble submitting to authority—even submitting to the authority of God. Let’s see what James has to say about this problem.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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