

Use “The Scene” to introduce “The Family of God” the High School Sunday school lesson for May 28, 2017. The lesson is found on page 81 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



About a decade ago this summer, real estate queen Leona Helmsley passed away, leaving a chunk of change (about 12 million dollars’ worth) to her beloved pup, Trouble. She left two of her grandchildren out of the will entirely.

Mrs. Helmsley, once dubbed the “Queen of Mean,” did not have the happiest of lives. She became a symbol of 90’s extravagance and entitlement, and was put in prison for tax evasion. And the cutting out of her will of her family members seems to hint at less than friendly familial relations. Most of her fortune, which amounted to several billion dollars, was designated to go into a trust for the care of animals. But 12 million was set aside specifically for her precious pet. Trouble survived death threats and managed to live another four years after his owner passed away, even though his inheritance was cut to a paltry 2 million by a judge. (We assume he had to cut back significantly on his grooming schedule, which was no doubt some cause of stress.)

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

**Have you heard of the story mentioned in this article? What are your views about it?**

**Sometimes people love their pets so much, they treat them like family. What do you think about that?**

**Have you ever known of someone who had very few friends but loved their pets? Or have you ever known someone who was mean toward other people but loving and generous to animals? Why do you think some people have an easier time building a relationship with an animal than they do with humans?**

**We don’t have to be related by blood to be family, but generally it does help to be the same species. In a way, we are all part of the same family, related by the blood of Jesus. Let’s look at how people become members of God’s family.**