

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Relationships” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for February 18, 2018. 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

On a day when, in most schools, the biggest drama would have circled around who got a Valentine’s Day present and from whom, seventeen people lost their lives in the latest school shooting. As I write this, details are still emerging about Nikolas Cruz, the young man who apparently walked onto the campus of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, with a loaded weapon and the intent to kill. But the picture that is forming is a familiar one: a loner, a history of getting into trouble, and broken relationships.

Reports say the 19-year-old had been recently expelled from the school due to a fight that might have had to do with a former girlfriend. Some survivors described the suspected shooter as “creepy and weird.” Other reports say he may have been diagnosed with autism. He and his brother were adopted by a couple, then the father died of a heart attack while the boys were still very young. Nikolas’s mother then passed away just a few months ago. Some reports said that some fellow schoolmates had broken off contact with him because his behavior became increasingly disturbing.

Another student described Cruz as “definitely not accepted” at the school. He told a reporter that the school had a place dubbed the Emo Gazebo, “where all the kids that are considered weird or not accepted sat.” But even there Cruz did not find acceptance. “He was just an outcast . . . He didn’t have any friends” (reporting from Taylor Lorenz, [www.thedailybeast.com](http://www.thedailybeast.com)).

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

**Relationships with human beings can be tricky and hard to navigate. It can be difficult to know what’s going on in the lives of the people around us. When you read this article, what thoughts do you have about Nikolas Cruz?**

**Some students reported that Nikolas was always talking about guns and shooting things, even sometimes about shooting people. Talking about violence—hurting animals, hurting other people, or hurting themselves—can be a sign that someone has endured or is suffering some kind of trauma or mental/emotional harm. What should you do if you ever hear someone talking like this? What could be some safe ways you could help someone who was talking of such things?**

**One of the important things to learn when developing relationships is that everyone needs to have healthy boundaries. But being clear about your boundaries and about what is or is not acceptable behavior can be hard to talk about. What alternatives can you think of as ways to stay connected with someone who has behavioral problems, instead of cutting them off entirely? As a Christian, what can you do or what should you do to try to make people who are considered “outcasts” feel included?**

**Feeling supported, loved, and accepted is something a lot of people get from their families—but not every person has that sense of belonging. However, every Christian person belongs to the family of God. Today we’ll talk about three attitudes we should have as brothers and sisters in Christ.**