

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Hannah—A Woman of Gratitude” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for November 5, 2017. The lesson is found on page 63 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



Soon we will be celebrating Veterans Day, a day set aside to remember the sacrifices of the men and women who have fought for freedom on behalf of the United States. Many people, when they see a man or woman in a service uniform, choose to honor that person by saying, “Thank you for your service.” But as a recently released film shows, this simple statement of gratitude can sometimes trigger negative feelings for some veterans.

Less than 10 percent of the U.S. population have served in the military. A person returning from having fought overseas is a member of a small minority, which means, of course, that most people do not know what that experience is like. Veterans returning from active duty often struggle to “fit in” with civilian life due to this lack of understanding. The man or woman who gave orders on difficult, life-threatening missions may come home and be expected to take on a so-called normal routine as a mom or dad working in a local business, taking orders from other people.

Imagine for a moment that your “service” to others meant that you saw horrible things happen in front of you—things that you couldn’t control and couldn’t help. Imagine that your “service” meant watching people get hurt, and even at times causing harm to others. Imagine that your “service” meant listening to someone cry out in pain or watching a friend die. Imagine that your “service” meant being on constant, high-stress, high-alert for extended periods of time. Imagine that your “service” meant missing out on important family events and then feeling like a stranger in your own home. Then imagine how it would feel to have some random person on the street come up to you out of nowhere and pat you on the back and say, “Thank you for your service.”

It’s not that it’s a bad thing to say. It’s just that it shouldn’t be the only thing we do to show our gratitude to people whose service has cost them personally so much.

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

What do you think about this article? What do you think is the point that is being made?

What is a way you think you could show gratitude to a person who has served in the armed forces?

Have you ever been on the receiving end of a comment that was meant to be nice, but produced a mixed reaction in you? What happened? What was it about the comment that backfired?

Sometimes we take things for granted and forget to be grateful for our blessings. Today we’ll look at Hannah and see what happened to her as she tried to express her gratitude to God.