

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Prince of Peace” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for December 24, 2017. The lesson is found on page 23 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

In an area of what is now Israel, where Jesus might have walked and about an hour southeast of his boyhood home in Nazareth (also where the body of King Saul once was hung), in a place called Beit She’an (Beth Shan), peace is being cultivated on the wings of barn owls, instead of the proverbial dove.

As reported in the UK newspaper, *The Independent*, a conservation project started 30 years ago has had a peace-building effect among Jordanians, Palestinians, and Israeli Jews. The project began with the goal of rebuilding the barn owl population in an area where farmers had extensively used poison to control the number of rats. Barn owls would eat the poisoned rats and then die themselves. Gradually the farmers were convinced to stop using poison and over time, and with help from the conservationists, the barn owls multiplied. Each barn owl can eat up to 6,000 rodents in a year, which makes them an effective natural form of pest control.

Since 2002, Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians who were interested in the project have been meeting regularly—even during periods of conflict. Another conservation project has been started as well, which utilizes abandoned bunkers along the Israel-Jordan border to provide safe homes for some rare and endangered bats.

One of the researchers on the barn owl project, Professor Alexandre Roulin, said, “When you have an issue people have to solve, nothing to do with religion, tradition, or culture, people really agree to be together. For us this is a message of hope. They love each other, they are friends.”

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

What do you think of this story?

Have you ever been involved in a project in which enemies or people who didn’t like each other were forced to work together? What happened?

In the newspaper article, the researchers mention the fact that they make deliberate efforts to avoid hot-button issues such as religion or politics. What good do you think is done by getting parties in conflict to work together on issues that don’t have anything to do with the issues they are fighting over? What challenges might this path present? In other words, if the warring parties never get around to discussing the issues that they are fighting over, can real peace still be achieved? Explain your thoughts.

This is a time of year when we think about the birth of Jesus, who was known as the Prince of Peace. Today we’ll look at three different ways that Jesus brings peace to our lives and find out why He was known by that title.