

Use “The Scene” to introduce “It’s How You Play the Game” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for March 15, 2020. The lesson is found on page 17 of *Young Teen Teacher* by 21st Century Christian.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

We interrupt regular programming to talk for a moment about—you guessed it—COVID-19. Whether you think of it as an overreaction, a big drag on your plans, or a frightening health threat, this virus is undeniably a fact of our lives right now. And if it hasn’t somehow impacted your activities or the toilet paper supply in your area of the world yet, just get ready—it will.

So, what do we do about it? How do we deal with something like this that seems so big and is affecting so many people, yet seems so confusing and hard to predict? It’s like we’ve suddenly been enlisted in an army we didn’t know about to fight a war no one heard about until a minute ago. And what’s a win in this type of situation? What’s a loss? And who are we supposed to help? And how?

I think Jesus’ words about what’s most important are applicable here (Matthew 22:37-40: “Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

What do you do in a world filled with disease and sickness and anxiety? The same thing you’ve been doing. Keep loving God. With all your heart. Give your heart’s concerns and fears to God. With all your soul and all your mind. Give all your anxious thoughts and emergency plans and analytical reasoning to God. Ask for His wisdom. Ask for His understanding. Ask for His peace.

And keep loving your neighbor. Take care of people around you. You can do that in a couple ways—one is to be considerate of others. In other words, keep your germs to yourself as much as possible. But also, take care of those around you, especially particularly vulnerable people. Work with your families and your churches to make sure people in your circles or in your neighborhoods have their needs met. Reach out to people online and spread words of encouragement, of hope, of the love of God and of His peace that is greater than all viruses, all natural disasters, and every fear we face.

This is an unusual time in the life of the church, and we realize you may or may not still be meeting with your youth. If you are still meeting together (whether in person or virtually), we encourage you to take time out from the normal curriculum subjects to just let your teens voice their worries, their stories, things they’ve heard about, and so on. Take time to listen to them and offer comfort and peace and prayer as needed. If you want to connect this to the curriculum topic for the week, here are some discussion questions to help you do that.

Have you ever felt really small when a big thing was happening around you? What does that feel like to you?

When plans get changed and businesses start closing down, it can feel like you’re losing a lot. It can feel like the world is against you. How do you deal with that?

What helps you feel safe and at peace when things aren’t going the way you planned?

Sometimes life feels like a big contest and at times we feel like losers, and at times we feel like winners. Today we’ll look at attitudes about winning and losing that are found in the Bible.

