

Use “The Scene” to introduce “A Matter of Life and Death” the High School Sunday school lesson for June 21, 2020. The lesson is found on page 17 of *High School Teacher* by 21st Century Christian.



Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

This Sunday is Father’s Day. And I’m sure for many this year, this week is just hard. Many have lost fathers and grandfathers and father figures due to COVID-19. Others are remembering those who have been unjustly imprisoned or killed as a result of division and unrest in this country or other countries around the world. Our prayers are with all those families who cannot be physically together this weekend.

It is a sad fact that we often don’t really notice or appreciate the efforts and gifts of the ones closest to us until after they are gone. Father’s Day, in fact, was begun as a way of remembering fathers who had passed. There are at least two stories about its origin. One was that it was started as a way of remembering all the fathers who were among the 361 men killed in a terrible mining accident in West Virginia in 1908.

Another story is that it was started by the daughter of William Smart. Sonora Smart Dodd wanted to honor the man who served as both mother and father to her and her five siblings for many years. He was a veteran of the Civil War, and he lost his wife during the birth of their sixth child. Sonora wanted fathers like hers to be celebrated and suggested that the anniversary of her father’s death—June 5—be a day dedicated to fathers. Some planning issues there in Spokane, Washington, then caused the day to be moved to the third Sunday in June—June 19, 1910. However, the day was not recognized as a national holiday until 1972, during the Nixon administration.

We use this day now to remember those fathers who can’t be with us, and to celebrate with those who can. Having a good, solid father as a role model in our lives can make all the difference—fathers can provide a sense of security, strength, and pride for their children. Having the faithful, steady presence of a father can make us feel more sure about the world and less fearful of what is to come. Thankfully, we all can know the love of a father through the presence of our Father God. And we can all be sure that this Father will love us always, through life and death, and for eternity.

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

What feelings do you have about Father’s Day and why?

What kind of difference do you think it makes to have a strong father in a person’s life? Does it make a difference? What kind of impact does it have when a father dies or otherwise is removed from the family unit?

Who is a steadying force in your life? Who can you go to for consistent support?

We all have times that challenge our faith—times when life just seems uncertain, and we are so afraid of the unknown. At those times, it helps to have a strong voice in our lives to encourage us and provide hope and safety. Jairus was a faithful father, but he must have been terrified of losing his daughter, so he sought help from the only person he knew had the power to save her. Let’s see how Jesus responded to one father’s faith and fears.

