

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Sincerely His” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for July 5, 2020. The lesson is found on page 29 of *Young Teen Teacher* by 21st Century Christian.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

In this day and age, perhaps more right now than ever, the actions and words of prominent Christians are being watched and tested. People are watching and listening to see what side of the issues others are on, and they are also watching and listening to see who is for real and who is not.

When Kanye West wrote and produced an album (*Jesus Is King*, released last fall) that was claimed as an outpouring of his Christian faith, many doubted whether he was for real. But when people questioned whether a man who had been known for his arrogance and seemingly self-centered ambition could really be interested in praising God and ministering to others through his music, Kanye’s answer seemed sincere: “All of that arrogance and confidence and cockiness that y’all seen me use before, God is now using for Him” (spoken at Lakewood Church).

West this week released “Wash Us in the Blood” (with Travis Scott). It’s also been reported that he made a deal with the Gap stores for an apparel line, for which he signed a handwritten note saying he was humbled for the “opportunity to serve.” And collaborator Kid Cudi teased a new CGI animated series based on the album he made with Kanye, *Kids See Ghosts*. No one can help but admire the level of creativity and innovation and reinvention that Kanye has achieved, but people will be watching still to see whether all of this work is really about King Jesus, or about making Kanye king of pop culture.

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:

Kanye has made big claims in the past—both about his own talent and about his faith in God. Do you think it is a good or a bad idea for famous figures to make public statements about their faith?

This weekend marked another birthday for the United States of America—the land of the free. Kanye is free to create music and to say whatever he wants about Jesus, with no fear of being censored by the government. Do you think the freedoms Christians have to worship in the United States are helpful or possibly harmful to the body of the church? Explain your answer.

Do you think Christians who are in very public positions have a greater responsibility to reveal their steps of faith and give their testimony? Why or why not? And do fellow Christians have any responsibility to support them?

Christians, like Kanye, are often in the position of having their faith and sincerity questioned. But even Jesus’ beliefs and truthfulness were questioned by those who claimed to follow God. Today we’ll look at an account in Matthew to find out Jesus’ attitude toward insincerity.

