

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Is Jesus Really the Only Way to Heaven?” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for April 23, 2017. The lesson is found on page 49 of *Young Teen Teacher*.



These days, our consumption of media is such that people can become famous overnight for singing a song, playing a prank, or filming themselves after having dental surgery. Perhaps the latest, and most disturbing, way to achieve instant fame has now emerged—murder. The most recent big story on this subject broke this past week when a man gunned down a random stranger—a retired Cleveland grandfather—and then posted the video of the killing on Facebook.

More than a thousand people viewed the video before Facebook discovered it and took it down. But this wasn't the first act of violence to be posted on the social media network (though it does appear to have been the first time a person posted a video of themselves preparing to kill another person and then following through with the act itself). Since the launch of Facebook Live, unedited videos of police shootings, rape, torture, and suicide have been broadcast through the feature. And though the leadership of Facebook denounce such videos, they are struggling to keep up with censoring the postings. Apparently, it is difficult to train computers to identify the acts that Facebook would like to keep off its network, so they rely instead on the eyes of their employees and on other Facebook users to flag unsavory content.

But this recent event, and the cases of several teen suicides (and the growth of a culture in which there seems to be an ever-strengthening emphasis on and eagerness for, especially among young people, achieving fame or even, sadly, posthumous fame) has many people asking, “Where are we headed?” and “Who decides what is OK to view and be viewed?” Other people are asking, “What responsibility do the viewers have in these cases?” or even, “What liability must the viewers have?”

Certainly, we all need to be more aware of the influence social media is having on us, on our friends, and those who are in our care. And we all need to think more carefully about what fame means, and what it costs. There may be quick roads to get it, but there are also equally fast paths to destruction.

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

What are your thoughts about the recent events mentioned in this article?

Have you ever thought about becoming famous? What would you do if you found out a quick way to obtain fame all at once? What kinds of things would you be willing to do to become famous?

Some people might say the best way to achieve notoriety is to work hard, become really excellent at something, and do that thing for a very long time. What do you think of that advice?

A lot of people would like to take a shortcut to fame and fortune—they want a quick way to get to the so-called good life. But there is no shortcut to everlasting life. Today we'll find out why Jesus is the only way to get to Heaven.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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