

Use The Scene to introduce “Wonderful Counselor,” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for December 7, 2014. The lesson is found on page 7 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Many teens having severe problems with their parents find themselves on the streets, fending for themselves. Where can homeless teens turn for wisdom and direction? In Washington, DC, many have found help. It all started . . .

When Deborah Shore was a student at Antioch College in Ohio, she was able to spend her junior year in Washington working with runaways. It was 1971, a time when many teens were rebelling against their parents’ values. Shore found teens who had been thrown out of their homes and who were hooked on drugs.

A few years later, Shore founded the Washington Streetwork Project. With a small staff and a few volunteers, Shore counseled these young people on the streets. Christ Church in Georgetown donated basement space for the project, a place where teens could leave the streets for coffee and conversation. The focus of the organization’s early work was to help young people sort out what brought them to the streets and to reconnect them to home.

In 1976, Shore and the Washington Streetwork Project came to the attention of Evangeline Bruce, wife of U.S. ambassador David Bruce. The couple helped the charity buy a building. Shore’s organization was renamed Sasha Bruce Youthwork to honor the Bruces’ late daughter, Sarah, who had helped troubled youth as a volunteer when she was in school.

Shore believed that by talking *with* teens rather than *at* them, it was often possible to repair damaged family ties. Today Sasha Bruce Youthwork helps young people find safe homes, achieve and maintain good health and mental health, create and strengthen supportive and stable families, and explore opportunities in education and careers.

Vernon, a trainee at Sasha Bruce YouthBuild Workforce Development program, credits the charity that Deborah Shore started with changing his life. “YouthBuild has assisted me with finding transitional housing, my education, and job training,” says the once-homeless teen. “Sasha Bruce [Youthwork] has given me the first pillow in almost two years to lay my head on.”

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:

In your experience, what are some reasons teens have problems at home? What are some results that stem from those problems? Name some places teens go in response to such issues. Tell why you think programs like Sasha Bruce Youthwork are necessary.

List some other places people go to seek wisdom and direction. What do you look for when you are seeking someone to offer you counsel? Where would you *not* go when seeking advice? Explain.

This world is filled with many problems and difficult situations. We often find ourselves wishing someone could give us reliable help with our issues. But even the best human counselor is not always effective. The Bible, however, describes Jesus as the *Wonderful Counselor*. Let’s see what makes His advice more reliable than the advice of others.