

Use “The Scene” to introduce “The Grand Opening” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for February 26, 2017. The lesson is found on page 81 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



Radical Muslims. Black Lives Matter. Refugees. Illegal immigrants. Evangelical Christians. Conservatives. Liberals. Alt-Right. Anti-Defamation League. Communists. Latinos. Lawyers.

Flip through a few of the top news articles on any of the major news organizations sites and it probably won't be long before you come across one of these names or terms. And each of them will mean different things to different readers. It's also highly likely that at least one of these terms will have a negative connotation for the person reading this post right now.

Now, we don't even have to get into the actual details of the stories or the reasons behind the associations each term carries with it to discover something about the use of these terms—they invite prejudice. They inspire opinions based on no actual experiences. They emphasize the whole body, instead of individual bodies. Instead of recognizing the humanity and diversity of each group, the use of these terms entices us to see the people behind them as blocks, units, mobs—all the same kinds of people, thinking all the same thoughts, for all the same reasons. But this is not a useful or charitable or accurate representation of the truth about who any of these people are.

Perhaps we could think about some other names we could all agree to be called: sheep, family, servants, children—human beings. Perhaps by using these names, we might get closer to the Truth.

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

Read the first paragraph again and consider what images or descriptions pop into your mind as you read it. Where do you think those particular images or associations come from?

Is there anything wrong with placing people into certain categories? Explain.

There's no doubt that God loves the whole world—He sent His only Son to save it. But can labeling people make it hard to show people the love of Christ? Explain. How could even placing labels on ourselves make it hard for us to receive the love of Christ?

We place people into categories without even noticing it. But that can lead to stereotypes and judgmental attitudes. Peter had to face his own judgments about people. God showed Peter that His kingdom is offered to everyone.