



Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture



Use “The Scene” to introduce *High School Bible school Lesson 3*.

Just a few weeks ago, most high schools across the country celebrated a traditional rite of spring: prom. Around that same time, the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) put on their own version of prom, a dance for all ages of pediatric patients, from high schoolers down to toddlers.

MSKCC started the annual event 15 years ago. It was a simple gathering for a handful of children well enough to head to the playroom. Now the dance has grown to about 80 participants. Patients can choose from donated formal gowns and tuxes to wear on the big day. The hospital cafeteria is transformed into a dance hall, complete with decorations and a DJ. Volunteers help dancers get ready, painting faces for the younger kids, painting fingernails for the girls, and finding hats for the boys.

Shannon Callagy (age 16) said, “When you don’t really feel that well, you don’t see anyone. But this is nice. We can all have fun here together.”

Natalia Harris (age 12) said, “I want to dance around because I can’t—I’ve danced all my life, but I can’t dance now.”

Some dancers remained attached to their IV poles, but it didn’t stop the fun. Family and friends, as well as doctors and nurses joined in the party.

Erin Chance has a 5-year-old son, Patrick, at the hospital. She said, “This means a lot. He definitely associates the hospital with a lot of pain. His treatment is very painful and it makes him feel very bad, so to see him here and having fun with his friends, his nurses, it’s great. To see him out there, healthy, energetic, just keep moving, means the world.”

Some patients begin to socially withdraw during long and painful stays at the hospital. Dr. Farid Boulad noted what a good experience the prom is for the patients: “On that day, everything that has to do with cancer is gone. And they are the kings and queens and they’re beautiful.”

In 2007, MSKCC began another event they hope to make an annual tradition as well: high school graduation to honor students in the hospital or those released from the hospital who worked hard to complete their degrees despite undergoing cancer treatments.

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:

Have you ever been treated for cancer or do you know someone who has? How did the experience make you or the other person feel, both physically and emotionally? What benefits do you think the hospital prom will have on the patients who attend?

This hospital, as well as hospitals and research centers around the world, continue to try treatments and search for a cure to defeat cancer and prolong life. Name some other things people attempt in order to postpone death—consider attempts that work and ones that don’t.

The goal of MSKCC is to postpone death for its patients. Yet at some point, everyone will die. Today we’ll look in the Bible to read about a father whose daughter died, yet he had faith that Jesus could change the outcome. Let’s see how both life and death submit to Jesus.