

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Following the Right Leaders,” the High School Sunday school lesson for August 2, 2015. The lesson is found on page 53 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Recent news reports say that actor Tom Cruise will leave the Church of Scientology (having been a member since the 1980s) because of his daughter. Tom’s ex-wife (Katie Holmes) and their daughter, Suri, are not members of the church; therefore, Tom is not to have much interaction with Suri or attend events she’s involved in.

But wait. Others of Tom’s family, including older children from a previous marriage, *are* members of the church. If it’s true that the church forbids members from contacting people they consider “suppressive persons” (“enemies” of the church, such as ex-members), will Tom’s leaving sever those family relationships?

Scientology teaches that humans (embodied *thetans*, who are originally godlike) need Scientology to “clear” them of what’s been corrupted and is blocking their power to control matter, energy, space, and time. People reincarnate until success is achieved—and Scientology programs are expensive. According to GotQuestions.org, “Scientology was founded in 1953 by fiction author L. Ron Hubbard, just four years after he made the statement, ‘I’d like to start a religion—that’s where the money is.’” The church’s “bible” is Hubbard’s writings.

But wait. Another report says Cruise is *not* leaving Scientology. In fact, he and the church are partnering to launch a “new media company to produce films and TV shows, as well as launching a TV news network” (which the church itself has supposedly dubbed “the CNN of Scientology”). Aerial photos do show a massive complex under construction, which former Scientologists say is being built by workers who are paid only 50 cents an hour. Reportedly, the studio will be used to make videos designed to recruit members, while Cruise will also film his Hollywood movies there.

But the end of that story may have to wait. New reports predict that Cruise is planning to marry his assistant, Emily Thomas. The church did not support Cruise’s previous marriages. One report said, “Every woman Tom ever dated had to be screened and approved by the Church, so if it’s true that he and Emily are now engaged, it stands to reason that she got [the leader’s] blessing. She might already be a Scientologist, for all we know.”

But wait. Other reports say absolutely that no marriage to Ms. Thomas is planned. . . .

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:

How can you tell what’s true/false in the above story? How important is it to you to be able to believe that the people you count on are telling you the truth?

How do you decide which people you will “follow” as your leaders . . . socially? for career/education advice? spiritually?

Why do you think people put their trust in the leaders of the Church of Scientology?

The results of following the wrong leader can be devastating. Jesus warned His disciples to consider three things before following a leader. Let’s discover what they are.

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