

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Being Honest with God” the High School Sunday school lesson for December 13, 2015. The lesson is found on page 11 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

During prime shopping time, a “bad Santa” posted himself outside the Macy’s store in Herald Square, asking for \$5 from anyone who wanted to take a photo with him. According to an article posted online for the *New York Post*, “Kriss Kringle” (as he claimed was his name), carried a red bag full of cash and clothes as he made his way through the crowds of shoppers and tourists. The man apparently even ruffled the feathers of fellow costumed beggars in the area, who felt the bearded imposter was giving them a bad name by pushing people to give a certain amount. However, the street Santa suggested he was offering passers-by a deal compared to the photo prices offered inside the store.

A spokesman from Macy’s was quoted as saying, “The one and only Santa Claus resides at Macy’s Santaland on the eighth floor.”

It was not clear where the donations that the man had gathered would be going, though he stated “some” of the funds would be going to local charities.

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 would you label this man—is he a fraud or merely a shrewd businessman? Is there anything wrong with what he’s doing?

It’s not uncommon at Christmastime for dishonest people to try to take advantage of others with good intentions. How do you tell if someone is trying to cheat you? How do you spot a fake?

The fact that this Santa was able to be so successful collecting money from people just passing by on the street tells us that many people had extra money to give away. How do you make decisions about how to spend or give away money? What influences your decisions?

It seems as though human beings are very good at cheating one another! It is not surprising, then, when we read that the prophet Malachi accused his people of trying to cheat God. In making that charge, Malachi spoke of God’s faithfulness, our betrayal of God, and the reward God wishes to give us if we change our ways.