

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” the High School Sunday school lesson for December 11, 2016. The lesson is found on page 11 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



Just when you thought it was safe to watch the news . . . it’s not. Or at least, you have to be careful. The latest controversy in the news now is the news itself—specifically, whether it’s “real” news or “fake” news. Fake news are stories that originate from a person or an organization posing as a real source, and yet are based on completely unfounded reports and in some instances, are wholly made up.

So far fake news stories have been said to have swayed the recent presidential election, caused public harassment, and resulted in destroyed businesses and, some claim, even destroyed lives.

Facebook is now making a move to block fake news links. NPR has put out a report trying to help listeners track and verify news stories themselves. And China is apparently working to fine or shut down websites that publish fake news (though China’s record does make one wonder if they are not just using this as another reason to practice censorship).

In one fabulously ironic story, the *Washington Post* published a story claiming that Russian propaganda helped spread fake news during the election, but has since admitted that the *Post* could not actually “vouch for the validity” of the findings in that story—basically saying that the whole story could have been—you guessed it—fake news.

But there was one story of good news that absolutely could be trusted. I mean, when the news is delivered by angels, you kind of have to believe it, right? Check it out in the most reliable news source ever, in Luke 2:10-12.

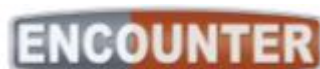
As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above article to read. Then discuss it in this way:

Have you ever heard a message, announcement, or news story that turned out to be not true? What happened?

At Christmastime there are certainly a lot of messages vying for our attention. And there are a lot of stories of both good and bad human behavior in the news. Think about one story or commercial message or even a movie or show you’ve seen so far this year that seems to have a real Christmas message wrapped up in it. Describe it and say why you feel it portrays something real about Christmas.

Have you ever had anyone question the truth of the biblical Christmas story in a conversation with you? What did you say? And if that hasn’t happened to you, what do you think you would say in response?

There are many kinds of messages in our world today, and many ways to communicate those messages. Some of those messages are definitely more important, and more true, than others. God sent a truly vital message through His angels. Let’s examine that message today.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

© 2016 Encounter Curriculum. Written by Laura Derico. Copies may be made for classroom use only. Not for resale.

<http://www.encounterface2face.com/category/the-scene/>