

## *Setting The Scene ~ News Reading Script*

**News reader:** Good morning. Here is today's news. It has been announced that star striker Thierry Henry is to leave Arsenal to join the non-league side, Penicuik Athletic, in a free transfer deal.

Meanwhile rock group U2 have cancelled their sell-out stadium tour of the US, choosing instead to play a series of free concerts in the North Kirk. The news was the icing on the cake for the church, coming only hours after they heard that they'd successfully secured Hollywood star, Tom Cruise, for the role of Joseph in next year's nativity play.

Royal news, and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was yesterday spotted at Noble's Nissan Dealership. Her Majesty was agreeing a deal for the dealership to buy the entire fleet royal of cars, having decided that she will in future travel only by public transport.

Business news, and Richard Branson has announced he is to walk away from the Virgin business empire. Mr Branson has told friends that he wants to run the convenience store in the Penicuik precinct.

And finally, police have said they will take no further action against Mr Ivor Goodnews. They had been questioning Mr Goodnews after receiving reports that he was sending Christmas cards with the statement that the baby in the manger scene pictured on the front of the cards was the Son of God. Explaining the force's decision to reporters a top officer said 'We are satisfied that the majority of decent people will recognise the claims of Mr Goodnews about Mary's baby to be so far-fetched as to be incredible and unworthy of further consideration.' So there you are, don't try and read too much into the traditional Christmas story – just enjoy the sentimentality of that stable scene!

We're back this evening at 8pm, until then have a great day.

## *ALL-AGE TALK ~ LUKE 1:26-56*

Let's take another look at the first five pictures (not the newborn baby) from 'News reading' in turn. (See *Setting the Scene* above.) Can you remember what news you heard about Thierry Henry...U2...Tom Cruise...Her Majesty The Queen...Richard Branson? How believable was this news? Let's have a show of hand each time! Why is this news so hard to believe? I'll ask Fiona to note down the key words.

Now let's take another look at the sixth picture, the one of the newborn baby. Can you remember what news item related to this picture? Yes, that's right: Mr Ivor Goodnews' claim that the baby in the manger in nativity scenes is the Son of God. How believable is this claim?

Let's look back to today's Bible reading where we find these words: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God." That an angel should appear to Mary was surprising enough, but even more surprising was the news that Mary was going to have a baby and that the baby would be God's Son. In Jesus, God was showing himself to the world in a new way. So how does Jesus show us what God is like? I'll ask Fiona to note down our responses.

Think back for a moment to the other news items. God showing himself to us in Mary's baby might seem as unbelievable as those other news stories but the wonderful news of Christmas is that, unlike the 'news stories' we've just heard, that is actually what happened – Mary's child was the Son of God! Let's hear our responses to the question: "How does Jesus show us what God is like?" On the one hand, there are reasons why this news might seem hard to believe. But on the other hand, there is the evidence from Jesus' life and the stories we have about him that show he really is the Son of God.

This Christmas news would have turned Mary's world upside down; life would certainly never be the same again. But this news was also going to turn the world upside down. Her son was going to ensure that the hungry were fed and the poor cared for, while the rich and powerful would have to learn to do without. We can see this in Jesus' life and also in the lives of those people today who recognise him as the Son of God and so live as he lived and taught.