



 **The Scene**

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture



Use “The Scene” to introduce *Young Teen Bible school Lesson 4*.

The state of Florida is angry at the fashion choices of some of the students in its public schools. The Florida Senate has taken action to make a particular wardrobe fad illegal.

On Thursday, March 13, the Florida Senate passed a bill that will authorize suspensions for students who wear saggy pants. The bill’s sponsor is Democrat Senator Gary Siplin from Orlando. Siplin and other supporters of the bill say that such a bill is necessary to force schools to properly enforce dress codes. They further argue that parents are often not aware that their children leave home dressed inappropriately. Critics of the law say that the measure is unnecessary. They argue that student appearance and dress codes should be the responsibility of schools and parents, not the state legislature. The state House of Representatives will have to pass a similar law for the bill to move forward.

The hip-hop music world is credited with popularizing the fad of wearing pants that droop low enough to expose flesh or underwear. Supposedly the look comes from inmates in prisons where wearing belts have been banned. “All we’re trying to do now is trying to inform folks that we have a fad now that does not have a very good origination,” Siplin said. “We’re trying to make an example in school,” he added, saying it would help students get jobs and a degree.

Similar laws have been considered elsewhere. The Florida city of Riviera Beach passed its own saggy pants ordinance on March 11. The first offense carries a \$150 fine or community service. A second infraction carries a \$300 fine or more community service. Repeat offenders may receive a maximum penalty of 60 days in jail.

In September of 2007, the city of Mansfield, Louisiana, passed a law calling for a \$150 fine or 15 days in jail for anyone whose baggy pants exposes his or her underwear. Since November in that same year, the penalty has been \$100 in Pine Lawn, Missouri. Cities in Delaware, New Jersey, and Georgia have similar ordinances. Three years ago the state of Virginia also debated a droopy-pants law. The Virginia law would have imposed a \$50 fine on people who wore their pants so low that their underwear was visible in “a lewd or indecent manner.” The bill was later defeated and has never become law.

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:

What do think of the fad of wearing droopy pants? Why do you think that this fad has angered so many citizens and lawmakers across the country? Is this anger justified, in your opinion? Why or why not? What might be some unintended consequences of such laws?

What makes you angry? How do you react when this makes you angry? Name some unintended consequences of your anger. How could you better control your reactions?

It is obvious that many people around the country are angered by the saggy pants fad. They believe that their anger is justified. God says it is OK to get angry. Nevertheless, He wants us to respond to our anger and situations that spark it in ways that are wise. Today we will examine why it is important to keep cool in a heated situation.

