

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Overcoming Obstacles,” the Young Teen Sunday school lesson for November 15, 2015. The lesson is found on page 69 of *Young Teen Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

# the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

“We have freedom of association, we have freedom of religion, we have freedom of speech, and regardless whether or not an HOA [Home Owners Association] thinks they can take that right away, well there is a federal court that’s about to tell them, they’re not going to take anything away.” Those words came from Jeremy Morris of Hayden, Idaho, earlier this week after he received a letter from his neighborhood HOA threatening to sue him. Over what? Unruly pets? Excessive crowds? Loud music? Well, sort of. Over Christmas.

Morris lives in the West Hayden Estates community, where he purchased a home just last year. One of the main reasons he says he moved to the subdivision is because it allowed him more room for his Christmas display. The display opens five days before Christmas and runs from 6:00–9:00 p.m. Last year people traveled from all around to see the spectacle, which included thousands of lights, a living nativity scene, a choir, Santa Claus, and a camel named Dolly. It takes about three months to hang all the lights and set up the decorations. Morris says the lavish event doubles as a fundraiser and that he was able to donate hundreds of dollars last year to local children’s charities as a result. He figures the bigger the light show, the bigger the donation checks.

But not everyone sees it his way. “Your event will be offensive to the senses and will interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of your neighbor’s private property rights,” wrote attorney Scott Poorman on behalf of the HOA. “The quiet residential neighborhood of West Hayden Estates First Addition is not an appropriate location for such activities.” The HOA letter went on to cite concerns about excessive traffic, disturbing lights, and code violations that would occur with live animals such as camels.

Morris, however, thinks there’s more to it than that. “Their real agenda is to attack Christmas,” he said. “This is about hostility towards people of faith. I have certain religious beliefs that I hold dear to my heart. We wanted to help people in the community and promote Christmas as the Christian holiday it’s always been. . . . I live in the state of Idaho—where we are supposed to still have some religious freedom. And if I want to witness to people on my driveway or on my lawn, that’s my right.”

*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:*

**Do you think Jeremy Morris should be able to have his Christmas display? Why or why not?**

**Do you see a compromise that might work for everyone involved?**

**Have you ever had to overcome obstacles in order to accomplish something? Talk about it.**

**As Christians, we will face opposition at times in our lives. People won’t always agree with how we live or what we say. We may face people who want to oppose us as we attempt to obey God’s Word. Let’s take a look at how the apostles overcame the opposition they faced as they told others about the good news of Jesus.**



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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