

# Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants (2005)

Rated PG Our Content Rating: V-0 ; L-1 ; S/N-3 Running time: 113 minutes

*A friend loves at all times...*

*Proverbs 17:17a*

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant 5or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful 1 Corinthians 13:4-5*

Critics and much of the public Sisterhood of the Traveling (the male portion) have fallen Pants into the unfortunate habit of dubbing any movie in which women are the main characters as "chick flicks." Such is the case with director Ken Kwapis' delightful coming of age story of four teenaged girls, a film too good to be confined to just one segment of the movie market. Adapted by Delia Ephron and Elizabeth Chandler from the novel by Ann Brashares, this is a delightful tale that guys ought to be able to enjoy, as well as women and teenagers.

Four life-long friends giggle as they try on clothes at a thrift shop and come across what might be a bit of magic. The girls are of varying shapes and sizes, and yet the same pair of jeans that looks so good on the first also is attractive on the other three. They buy the pair and agree that each will

wear them for a week and then send them on to the next. Summer looms ahead, and for the first time in their lives they will be going separate ways. Thus the jeans are a fitting symbol of the many other things that tie them together. They agree to a set of rules, such as not allowing anyone else to take them off but themselves.

Lena (Alexis Bledel) is the first to leave, taking the jeans with her to visit her grandparents and family in an island Greek village that is so pristinely beautiful that heaven will scarcely seem like an improvement to the villagers. After a warm Greek welcome, she dons the jeans, and, during a walk by herself, falls into the harbor and almost drowns when a leg of the pants becomes ensnared on the bottom. Enter a handsome young college-student fisherman who dives in and rescues her. Wonder if they will see each other again, even though he is from a family that her grandfather hates?

Bridget (Blake Lively) goes off to Mexico to join a soccer camp. Blond and beautiful and supremely confident in her extraordinary athletic skills, she sets her sight on Eric, one of the young coaches. The jeans arrive for her week of wear, and soon she is set to score with the handsome young man of her choice—but will she be pleased with the outcome?

Carmen (America Ferrera, so radiant in *Real Women Have Curves*) has been looking forward to spending the summer with her father Al (Bradley Whitford), who had walked out on her and her Puerto Rican mom over ten years ago. There have been very few visits with him, so she cherishes this opportunity for them to get to know each other. What a shock as they drive up to a housing development home, the kind which he had once despised, and she finds that Dad is about to embark on his second family, a WASP with several children of her own. She is as upset that he told her nothing in advance as over the ruin of her dream of spending the summer having her father all to herself. How will she blend in with people so different from her?

Tibby (Amber Tamblyn of "Joan of Arcadia"), a would-be filmmaker, stays at home to work at Wal-Man's, where she hopes to interview fellow employees for a documentary she is working on. The arrival of the jeans seems to bring her little luck, though she does come across the prone figure of Bailey (Jenna Boyd), who has passed out in one of the store aisles. When she recovers, Bailey wants to become Tibby's assistant, but she is just 11 years old, so Tibby is not enthusiastic about this. Nonetheless, Bailey traipses along holding the mike boom during an interview. To Tibby's dismay she interjects a number of questions of her own. Although this seems disruptive at the time, later, after a dramatic event, Tibby realizes how insightful they were, and how much Bailey's cheerful optimism has affected her sardonic view of life.

There are funny and tender, tear-inducing moments in this film—the girls have been buffeted by life, one of them even losing her mother to suicide—leaving the viewer with plenty to think about, along with a feeling that despite all the bad, there is much good in the world. You women who are wives or girlfriends should make a deal with that guy in your life that you'll go with him to one of the summer boom-boom movies if he will accompany you to this one. The action film won't hurt you much, and Sisterhood just might help him understand what makes sisterhood so precious to you. Youth leaders ought to put this on their list of films for showing and discussing with the youth of their church.

## **For Reflection/Discussion**

(Mainly for youth)

1) What is the situation of each of the four friends? What have Bridget and Carmen lost? What does Lena have to overcome on the Greek isle? What seems to be Tibby's outlook on life? How does Bailey seem to be coping with her situation?

2) What do you think the pants symbolize in the film? Have you

shared something with someone in a similar way, such as a bracelet, charm, book, or—? How do the girls come to see the pants at the end of the film?

3) For those from divorced families: did you feel a measure of guilt as Carmen does? If one or the other parent remarried, how did you feel about this? What concerns arose as you adapted to the new situation?

4) For those with a deceased parent: what helped you cope? What issues arise especially when a parent takes her/his own life? Do you see any evidence of faith in Bridget or her friends? How might this have helped?

5) Tippy already knows what she wants to do in life. How will her skills with the video equipment contribute to this? Do you have yet a vocation in mind? What skills/interests do you have that might point you in the right direction to decide? How can friends contribute to this—such as Bailey? In what ways do you think that Tippy will become a better filmmaker from having known Bailey?

6) The last of the “Pants Rules” is what? How is the inclusion of loving yourself, as well as your sisters, important? How is this especially important for Carmen? How does she not conform physically with the “perfect” body image in our Barbie doll obsessed culture? Is this a problem for you or a friend? What could all the teen magazines, TV ads, TV programs and films make a full figure girl feel about herself?

7) Other than the part of a funeral and a wedding ceremony (standard Hollywood recognition of the church), what do we see of God or the church in the film? At what points do you think the Creator is working behind the scenes? For example, at what points do you see reconciliation taking place?