James

Lesson 2: My Favorite

**Lessons in this series:** [1](http://www.teensundayschool.com/45/lesson/youve-got-issues.php) **2**[3](http://www.teensundayschool.com/55/lesson/watch-your-mouth.php) [4](http://www.teensundayschool.com/64/lesson/the-time-of-your-life.php) [5](http://www.teensundayschool.com/65/lesson/must-be-the-money.php) 

LESSON OBJECTIVES  
Goals

1. To expose students to the sin of favoritism  
2. To help students experience favoritism in their midst  
3. To help students repent of their sin of favoritism and commit to a new path

Topics

Acceptance, Attitude, Caring, Fairness, Friendship, Judging, Prejudice

Scripture Memorization

James 2:1

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (10 minutes)

I want us to talk about the following questions. The only rules are that everyone has to answer and you can only pick one thing. If you’re a little uncomfortable with that, take a deep breath: it’s gonna be okay.

• What’s your favorite TV show currently on the air?  
• What’s your favorite song that’s out right now?  
• What’s your favorite junk food?  
• Who is your favorite person on earth?

GETTING STARTED (5 minutes)

The last question might have caught you off guard. While the first three were pretty harmless to answer, some of you might have felt awkward answering the last one—especially if two of your best friends are in the room! But it leads us to another question I want to give you all a minute to answer.

Question: When is it okay to have favorites and when is it not okay?

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

In James 2:1-13, we learn what it means to play favorites. Having a favorite song or sports team is one thing, while playing favorites with human beings is another. What he writes may surprise you. Take a minute and read it for yourself, James 2:1-13, and then we’ll discuss it together.

**Read James 2:1-13**

**Discussion Questions:**  
1. What does verse 1 say about favoritism? Why do you think it says that? *(Don't show favoritism.)*2. According to verse 9, is showing favoritism a sin? *(Yes.)*3. Why do you think that is? *(You should love others as yourself.)*This text is not saying that you can’t have a close group of friends, everyone does. It’s not even talking about cliques, that is a separate issue. Friendships are built with time, trust and commonality. What this text is talking about is how you treat “outsiders,” people you don’t know well and who don’t know you.

4. What example does James give to drive this point home? *(verse 2-7)*Alright, now we’re getting somewhere. He uses this analogy of a rich man and a poor man entering a room at the same time. The question he poses is, would you treat those people differently. Let’s do some soul searching here. Be honest with yourself.

5. How many of you would treat a well-dressed, approachable, attractive person who was a lot like you differently than you would a shabbily dressed, standoffish, and unattractive person?

Activity (10 minutes)

If you are able, invite someone to attend your meeting that the students don't know. If possible, make it someone their age. Have them come early, in plenty of time to meet students. Instruct the “stand-in” to use a fake name and have a story ready to answer questions. Don’t do any introducing for them, though. Make your students deal with him/her on their own. At this point in the lesson, reveal the stand-in and deal with the accompanying issues.

**(Reveal Stand-In)**I want to introduce you guys to someone. If you did more than say hi to (name) this morning, I want you to raise your hand. That means you introduced yourself, asked him or her how he or she was doing, where he or she was from, etc. A hi as you passed doesn’t count. But if you did more than that, raise your hand. Okay, you can sit down now.  I invited (name) here today to see how our group would do concerning favoritism. (name), let me ask you some questions.

• First of all, what is your real name? Where are you from?  
• What did it feel like when you walked in this morning? How did you feel?  
• How many people said anything to you?   
• Did you feel at any point like you weren’t wanted, didn’t belong, etc.?  
• If you were a high school student, would you ever return to our ministry based on the way you were treated today?  
  
Okay, fair enough, give (real name) a hand for being here.

MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)

**Discussion Questions**  
1. How do you think our group handles outsiders?  
2. What could our ministry do differently that would keep us from showing favoritism to people coming in for the first time?  
3. What could our ministry do differently that would keep us from showing favoritism to people who have been around for a while?  
4. In your own life, do you play favorites? Why do you think you do it?

CLOSING PRAYER (3 minutes)

And now, I think it’s time for some corporate repentance. We can all do better at not playing favorites. James is clear: favoritism is a sin. I want to ask you all to kneel at your seats. I’m going to lead us in a prayer in which I want all of you to repeat what I say:

*Holy God, we have sinned against you…  
 We have considered ourselves better than others…  
 We have valued people with wrong judgment…  
 We have overlooked the outcasts unfairly  
 We have shown favoritism, and we are wrong…  
 Give us your eyes to see others…  
 Give us your hearts to love others…  
 Give us your kindness to share with others…  
 Forgive us of our sins…  
 Thank you for not overlooking us…  
 Amen.*