high school

Lesson 11 / November 15, 2026

The Experiment

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as STEP 1

Lesson 11
Focus:
Don't show favoritism.

Lesson 11
Bible Basis:
James 2:1–9;
Psalm 82:2–4

Lesson 11
Memory Verse:
Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and oppressed.
—Psalm 82:3

Students will watch a video about the current state of the conflict in Israel and Palestine and be confronted with the reality that all human beings are created equal, regardless of where they live.

Materials:
☐ Internet access

In October of 2023, a new conflict between Israel and Palestine began. Israel and Palestine have been in conflict for years over land rights, but this is a new conflict. This conflict began when the Hamas terrorist group from Palestine launched an attack on Israel that killed 1,400 people.

➢ **What facts have you heard about this conflict?** (Invite students to respond, encouraging them to be objective and factual rather than political.)

Let's take a look at the current state of the conflict in Gaza, where Palestinian refugees from this conflict have fled amidst this conflict.

Invite students to watch the following video [3:16; stop at 1:48]:
Gazans still living in rubble six months into Israel-Hamas ceasefire
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gwc7-BRzZm4

As this conflict has continued to develop over the last three years, every country, individual, and news source seemed to have an opinion about what was going on. As some people have talked about protecting the people of Israel—a good thing—they've suggested retaliation that would harm many Palestinian people who aren't part of the Hamas terrorist group.

➢ **When you put politics aside, why is it complicated to suggest a solution to a war that favors the safety of some people while putting other people in harm's way?** (Accept all reasonable, non-political responses.)

The complicated truth is that there are countless innocent people on both sides of the war—people made in God's image. While it's a good thing to seek an end to conflict and violence, it's important to consider options that don't play favorites or harm innocent people.

Not all examples of favoring some people over others is this extreme, but playing favorites in real life is still a bad idea. All of us are created in the image of God, which means all human beings are equal at the deepest level.

When we act like some individuals are better than others, the results are never good. That truth was recognized thousands of years ago by the authors of the Bible. Let's see what they wrote about playing favorites.

Additional resources:
https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Lesson 11 / November 15, 2026

The Experiment

for use as STEP 4

Lesson 11
Focus:
Don't show favoritism.

Lesson 11
Bible Basis:
James 2:1–9;
Psalm 82:2–4

Lesson 11
Memory Verse:
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Materials:
- ☐ Pens/pencils
- ☐ Index cards

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies to class.

Considering how to resolve a war is an extreme example of how things can become complicated when people play favorites. In real life, playing favorites can still be dangerous. If we treat someone as *more* important than others, they may start to act prideful or controlling. If we treat someone as *less* important, they may become weak or helpless.

➢ **Why do you think people start to live up to the way they're treated by others? For example, if someone is treated as weak or helpless, why might they actually become weak or helpless?** (Accept all reasonable answers.)

The best solution is for us to treat everyone like they're equal. But of course, that's easier said than done. There's something about human beings that makes us want to classify people—and of course, to ultimately decide we're better than them.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). **Today, let's make a plan for how you're going to treat someone as an equal this week. But here's the hard part—I want you to choose someone you've treated poorly in the past.**

First, think of a person that you've treated as worse than you this week. It's hard for us to admit it, but we've all done it. Maybe it was a homeless guy asking for money. Maybe it was an annoying kid at school you wish would leave you alone. Maybe it was your mom or dad, and you decided to treat them poorly because they wouldn't give you what you wanted. Have your teens decide on a person and write that person's initials really big on the left side of your paper.

Now, write *your* initials on the right side of the paper, and draw an equal sign between them. That's a reminder that this person isn't less of a human being than you—you're both equal because you were made by God. As an encouragement, be sure your teens know that you are completing the same assignment.

Finally, add one more thing to the paper. Write down something you can do to show this person that you regard them as equal. It could be anything from giving a compliment to hanging out with them to helping them solve a problem. Give your students a minute or two to decide upon an "equality action" and write it down.

- **Would anyone be willing to share what you're planning to do to demonstrate you're equal to the person you selected?** (Encourage, but don't require, your students to talk briefly about their plans. Read what you wrote on your own equality plan to let students know this is a safe place to share.)

This week, go out of your way to treat the person you wrote down as an equal! For starters, be sure to perform the act of kindness you wrote down. When you play favorites, you can do serious harm to people. Use *your* actions to prove that when you treat others as equals, you can do serious good!

Close in prayer.

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