

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**The Outsiders:** Obama, Romney Deal with Prejudice on Campaign Trail  
Paul Asay

**What Happened:**

With less than two months to go before Election Day, the race for the White House is on the home stretch; and the two major candidates—Barack Obama and Mitt Romney—espouse two very different visions of how to run the country.

To get where they are, both men had to overcome some issues that most other candidates haven't needed to worry about. Both, according to *The New York Times*, are outsiders from the American establishment in different ways.

Obama became the first person of African-American heritage to win the highest office in the land—a feat that might've been considered unimaginable 50 years ago when open prejudice was common in some parts of the country. While it might not show up on polls, racism is still an issue.

Romney, meanwhile, is a Mormon—a religious affiliation that still carries with it a deep stigma. Mormonism has been lampooned by “South Park” creators Trey Stone and Matt Parker in *The Book of Mormon*, lambasted for its polygamist past, and many Christians consider Mormonism to be a cult.

Both candidates have said the things that make them different have shaped their lives, but they've downplayed those differences at the same time. Obama is proud of his heritage, but he doesn't talk about it much. Romney says his faith is integral to everything he is, but he rarely mentions Mormonism by name.

Yet both of them largely have been accepted by most voters. Issues, not race or religion, have taken center stage in this election. The question remains as to which issues will be most important to voters—and which candidate they trust to represent them well.

**Talk About It:**

Even if you're not old enough to vote, you still should pay attention to the things—and people—impacting this country. What do you think are the most important issues America is facing? What issues are important to your family? Your friends? If you're comfortable talking about it, which candidate do you feel represents you the best?

We all know people vote for candidates for more than just their stance on issues. Many Americans, for instance, would say they'd never vote for an atheist. What else is important to you when you're deciding whether you like or are going to vote for a candidate? His or her morals? Personal lifestyle? Faith? Favorite sports teams?

Obama and Romney are judged sometimes by their race and/or religion. Do you sometimes feel as if you're judged? Do you think that sometimes people downgrade your talents or your intelligence because of how you look or what you believe? Have you been judged because of your race, gender or faith? How do you overcome those sorts of judgments?

**What the Bible Says:**

“Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal” (Ps. 69:4).

“Then Peter began to speak: ‘I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right’” (Acts 10:34-35).

“Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one” (2 Cor. 7:2).