



**GENERAL COMMISSION
ON RELIGION AND RACE**
of The United Methodist Church

Vital Conversations on Racism: A Guide to Small-Group Discussions about the Video Series

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Preface

Conversations around race can be uncomfortable for most of us. Conversations around race in the Church are no exception. The General Commission on Race and Religion of The United Methodist Church offers Vital Conversations on Racism: A Guide to Small-Group Discussions about the Vital Conversations Video Series as a way to begin dialogue, face our misconceptions and fears, and move deliberately to spiritual, community and social transformation.

The General Commission on Race and Religion offers resources to facilitate, guide, and support discussions on how to move to efficacy, justice, and courageous positive action. Our vision is to invite and lead the Church into new conversations about our relevance and our calling from God to serve a world that is far different from when we began our work. The commission strives to build the capacity of The United Methodist Church to be contextually relevant and to reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our ministry model provides resources for congregations and Church leaders to increase intercultural competency, institutional equity, and vital conversations.

We recommend conducting your study of the Vital Conversations Videos Series in nine sessions:

- Session 1: Introduction
- Sessions 2-8: Individual Videos and Discussion
- Session 9: Celebration and What's Next?

The introduction and closing sessions may be shorter or longer in length, depending on the group. The seven core sessions are designed to last about 90 minutes, including the videos. Each video is less than 20 minutes in length. We recommend eight to 10 people in the group for greater intimacy and participation. The flow of the core meetings is as follows:

- Check-in: Feedback on your week and prayer requests
- Prayer: Based in part on check-in
- Video: Viewing of the seven presenters
- Discussion: Questions based on the video
- Next week: Expectations and what is to come
- Closing prayer: Completed in unison

We are delighted that you have joined us to discuss the issues related to faith, culture, and fighting oppression in the Church and world today.

The videos and resources are available for advanced viewing or further study below.

Getting Started

Anyone who claims to live in God's light and hates a brother or sister is still in the dark. It's the person who loves brother and sister who dwells in God's light and doesn't block the light from others. But whoever hates is still in the dark, stumbles around in the dark, doesn't know which end is up, blinded by the darkness.

1 John 2:9-11 (The Message)

The assertion, "We are in this together," sometimes sounds empty and inauthentic, overused and void of true feeling and real action, especially at a time when our society seems so divided along lines of ideology, race, class, nation, culture, and ethnicity. Yet, as Christians, God calls us to come together and "get along," be in relationship as sisters and brothers in the light, rejecting the darkness and the sin of racism.

Moving into the light, we ask Church leaders and participants to come together in humility, vulnerability and willingness to have open conversations about race and racism. The first steps of organizing a group and coming together may be one of the most courageous things many of us have ever attempted. Committing to nine weeks of conversation brings us closer to transforming the world for Christ by dismantling racism.

This guide is for group facilitators who should prepare in spiritual and practical ways:

Prayer

Racism and segregation go back centuries in the United States in the form of enslaving Africans, colonizing and exterminating Native Americans, forcing Japanese Americans into internment camps, and more. We face centuries of systemic and institutionalized racism. Do not be daunted by this history of racism. God can transform all us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Small groups, modeled on Jesus' call to and teaching of the 12 disciples, is an important means for change.

Before your study group even gathers members and sets the first meeting date, be in agreement with at least one person praying for our world concerning racism, for the upcoming group and each potential member.

Read Psalm 7 as a foundational prayer for justice and a spiritual starting point, continuing to look to parts of the prayer throughout the sessions for the small group.

While praying as you start this study group, ask God to reveal other needs specific to group members. Pray that God will help:

- Soften the hearts of the people in your setting who will resist a small group that focuses on racial justice;
- Ready people who would never join such a group but do so ultimately;
- Prepare the hearts and spirits of facilitators and future members;
- Grant wisdom to everyone directly and indirectly connected to the group;
- Identify group members;
- Knit the group together as the nine weeks go by; and
- Make the Holy Spirit central in directing and leading the group.

Audience

Because racism is pervasive and destructive, the audience for this small group is anyone and everyone. That said, many specific groups and individuals would benefit: local church leadership, Sunday schools, young adults, Wesley Foundations, annual conference cabinets and staff, racially diverse mission and ministry groups, seminary classes, groups of lay leaders and local pastors in districts and conferences, white people, people of color, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, mission teams, and more.

Choosing or deciding on facilitators

When determining facilitators, seek people who are courageous enough to face and deal with the tension, emotional struggle and even possible recrimination that will come from discussing racism directly as a group.

Suggested reading for the facilitator(s)

We recommend advance reading before launching a group:

- *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* by Ronald Takaki.
- *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Peggy McIntosh (available at <http://nationalseedproject.org/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>).
- *Witnessing Whiteness: The Need to Talk about Race and How to Do It* by Shelly Tochluk
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Inviting people to participate in the study

- Pray. Ask God for direction on whom and how to invite.
- Be inclusive. Invite the people you know or who look like you, but also go beyond your comfort zone, asking new people who look and think differently.
- Ask. Boldly take a step of faith by asking an acquaintance or stranger to join.
- Decide methods of communication. An invitation in person or by phone or email is preferred. You may also promote participation with posters, e-blasts, Facebook, Twitter, and in-person announcements at gatherings.
- Be patient. Answers may not be immediate or come at all because people need room to pray and reflect on what will be a challenging journey, facing and acting against racism.
- Trust God. Know that by faith, a group will form. Continue to prepare the details and content for the sessions.
- Be flexible. Be willing to make changes midstream in planning, hearing from God, and listening to people around you and potential members.

Videos and questions

As the group watches each video together, invite discussion based on questions provided for each session. Share thoughts, impressions, and ideas. Keep in mind that it is easy to drift away from the difficult and uncomfortable topic of race and racism by deflecting and turning to other themes and issues. When relevant, recognize possible parallels with other forms of bias, institutional "isms," and forms of oppression, but keep the group focused on the grappling with racism.



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Session 1: Introduction

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

During the first week, the facilitator should pray rather than request a volunteer. The first day of a small group can be challenging and awkward. People may feel put on the spot if you ask them to pray. Focusing on racism further deepens the discomfort in the first days of small group activity.

Consider the following parts of a traditional prayer that might make a difficult theme of racism and justice easier to embrace, keeping in mind that prayer requires no formula:

- Adoration: Praise God for being the Almighty One for gathering the group together, dealing directly with the difficult subject of racism.
- Confession: Admit that we have all sinned and that racism is a sin.
- Thanksgiving: Express gratitude to God for the opportunity to have frank, safe discussions about racism as Christians.
- Supplication: Acknowledge joys and pray for sorrows shared by the group members at the start of the session.

Covenant

Small groups should create a covenant for the emotional and spiritual safety of each member and the group, along with concrete means of setting boundaries. Because of the sensitive nature of conversations about racism, a group covenant becomes more important.

Consider the following:

We join together to have new conversations about our relevance and our calling from God to serve a world that we pray will be far different as we begin our work fighting racism. We will build the capacity of our group to be more relevant to more people, younger people, and more diverse people in order to nurture disciples of Jesus Christ who will transform the world for the better. Our hope is that when our group ends, some or all of us will begin new small groups expanding the ministry of anti-racism.

We will strive to get to know one another, pray together, learn together, and serve and do outreach and justice together, keeping in mind that God is the leader and center of our small group.

Using the "Vital Conversations on Racism" videos and discussion guide, we will do all these things, developing a better understanding of racism and the tools to dismantle racism.

I agree to participate, faithfully attending the sessions, reading, contributing, and caring for the needs of others in the group. I will hold in confidence any personal information that group members share.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Encourage the group to draw from this covenant or write something new. You can use specific themes based on group discussion to encourage conversation in drafting a covenant. Respect multiple viewpoints; own your intentions and impact; challenge in love; take risks; name things; practice active listening; speak from your own experience; assert opinions without attacking other group members; affirm frustration, confusion, and fear; and maintain confidentiality.

Face Test: Do I have the full picture?

Spend 15 minutes doing the "Face Test."

The body of Christ is multicolored, made up of thousands of languages and experiences, multiracial, and interclass. However, our upbringing, family, friends, schools, and churches from which we develop our worldview are often not so diverse. Did your background expose you to the many textures of God's human family? Draw one component of a human face for every "yes" answer you get for the following questions (eye, eye, nose, mouth, ear, ear and hair). If you cannot draw a whole face, draw as far as you can, and be prepared to discuss the parts you COULD draw.

1. At least one member of my immediate family (parents, siblings, brothers/sisters-in-law, grandparents) is from a racial/ethnic group other than my own (meaning *at least one of their* parents is Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino/a, Native American/indigenous to the Americas, African-American or of African descent, or Anglo-/white/European descent).
2. At least one family on my block (one out of about 10 homes) is of a racial/ethnic group other than my own.
3. At least one of my close friends (you know their parents and/or you have programmed their phone number into your cellphone, etc.) is from a racial-ethnic group other than my own.
4. The church I attend is racially diverse (at least 10 percent of the membership is of a racial group other than my own).
5. The school I attend is racially diverse (at least 10 percent of the student body is from a racial group or groups other than my own).
6. Of my 10 closest friends (i.e., the last people you want to see before you die), at least one is from a racial/ethnic group other than my own.
7. I grew up in a home where I NEVER heard my parents or siblings say a negative word about groups of people by race or ethnicity (i.e. "Those dumb Puerto Ricans..."; "Jews only care about money"; she's poor white trash"; "Race mixing is not permitted in the Bible, so you can't date a black girl").
8. At least one of the friends with whom my parent(s) socialize and regularly invite to our home is from a racial/ethnic/language group other than their own.

-By Garlinda Burton. Copyright 2003

Based on the Face Test, discuss how participants could or could not create a full face. What does this test say about our worldview and experience when it comes to cross-racial relationships?

Next week

Prepare prayerfully to learn about "Deconstructing White Privilege" with Dr. Robin DiAngelo.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Dear God, conversations about racism are difficult. Yet, we come together, willing to do the hard work. We thank you, God, for this opportunity to enter this safe space to share openly about our national struggle, our global struggle, our church's struggle, and our personal challenges with racism. As we leave one another today, continue to draw our group together. Continue to challenge us about racism. Continue to lead us to act. Amen.



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Session 2: Deconstructing White Privilege

The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The Lord gives light to the eyes of both.

~ Proverbs 29:13, Amplified Bible

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray.

Video

Introduce the video "Deconstructing White Privilege."

All of us must seek the light of God, the light of truth in recognizing oppression. We begin to do so in this session, which focuses on the oppressive behavior that is born out of white privilege. Dr. Robin DiAngelo is transparent about white privilege couched in explicit and implicit biases in the video "Deconstructing White Privilege," the first in the series "Vital Conversations on Racism."

Dr. DiAngelo describes the most obvious and explicit aspects of racism and white privilege while going beyond the surface of racism. Her video serves as a foundation on understanding racism and white privilege for the remaining six videos in the Vital Conversations series.

Discussion

1. What ideas presented by Dr. DiAngelo stood out for you? How does she describe her experience as one who recognizes herself as a white person, especially when it comes to interacting with people of color?
2. How does denying the existence of racism and white privilege perpetuate racial inequality and unequal outcomes? What are explicit and implicit biases? Give examples from the video along with some of your own.

3. How can identifying the pillars – individualism, universalism, internalized superiority, good/bad binary, segregation, and miss-education – help challenge racism? What are the next steps?
4. Dr. DiAngelo says we are not "operating in the spiritual realm" when it comes to racial issues. Is this true for Christians? What does that mean concerning racism and justice both theologically and biblically? Based on our Christian experiences and the Bible, how can we begin to act against inequity and racism?

Next week

Prepare prayerfully to learn about "Church: Building the Beloved Community" with Dr. Miguel de la Torre.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Most High God, you urge us to seek justice for the widowed and the orphaned. For our contemporary times, one form of oppression is against people of color through white privilege. Open our eyes to the impact of racism on the widowed and the orphaned – the African- American woman brutalized by the police, the Mexican-American being told derisively to go back to Mexico. Use us to face white privilege and dismantle racism. Amen.



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Session 3: Church – Building the Beloved Community

The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but noncooperation and boycotts are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

~ The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., 1957

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

~ 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, New Revised Standard Version

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray.

Video

Introduce the video, "Church: Building the Beloved Community."

Dr. Miguel de la Torre's approach to dismantling racism is religiously analyzing social issues from the perspective of the dispossessed and disenfranchised. Dr. de la Torre focuses on the Church's role in embracing marginalized communities and cultivating a true spirit of multiculturalism in his video "Church: Building the Beloved Community." He names racism as a sin.

Questions

1. What are some of the barriers within The United Methodist Church to building the beloved community and combatting racism?
2. The United Methodist Church in the United States is 97 percent white. What barriers may prevent or discourage people of color from engaging in our ministries and attending our churches? How does our church (or ministry) rank in terms of bringing in people of color or people of other races and ethnicities?
3. What does Dr. de la Torre say about a "color-blind" approach to issues of racial inclusion and justice? What are the implications of racial color blindness in the Church?
4. What is the difference between individual versus broader social reconciliation?
5. What are some differences (and tensions) between the "Black Lives Matter" movement and those who express a preference or an emphasis on "all lives matter"?
6. What does the apostle Paul say about diversifying? What does the Scripture mean for diversifying the Church?

Next week

Prepare prayerfully to learn about "Ongoing Acts of Repentance" with the Rev. Glen Chebon Kernell Jr.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Lord Jesus, we humbly come to you repenting of our sins. Let us hear and support our indigenous sisters and brothers who suffer because of a long history of racism that affects all of us today. In our relationship with the indigenous community, let repentance move to meaningful action. Amen.



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Session 4: Ongoing Acts of Repentance

Bear fruit worthy of repentance.

~ Matthew 3:8, New Revised Standard Version

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray.

Video

Introduce the video, "Ongoing Acts of Repentance."

The Rev. Glen Chebon Kernell Jr. builds upon the previous video by Dr. de la Torre, calling the church to participate more vigorously by engaging in ongoing acts of repentance, justice making and truth telling about the historical and continuing impact of racism, specifically on Native Americans and indigenous people.

Questions

1. What is the United Methodist Acts of Repentance movement? How have various groups, particularly indigenous people, reacted to this movement?
2. What forms of racism have indigenous people encountered? What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself, particularly for indigenous communities and people confronted by racism?
3. What is some of the history of racism against indigenous people? What has this racism meant to indigenous languages? Does history influence us today? What is the impact of spiritual violence?

4. What has your annual conference, district, congregation, or ministry done to follow up on the 2012 Acts of Repentance? If your group is not familiar with the "Acts," what can you do to learn more and inform others in your ministry context?
5. Some non-Natives ask, "How many times do we have to apologize? When will you be satisfied?" What should be the Church's response to these questions?
6. How does working against racism and for justice connect to our Christian discipleship?

Next week

Remind group members to read Peggy McIntosh's *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*: <http://nationalseedproject.org/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack> before next week's session.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Loving God, we have all sinned. We come to you, repenting of the sin of racism. God, raise the consciousness of those whites in power who benefit from racism in the world and The United Methodist Church. Transform all of us in this struggle and help us to not be defensive. Once you open our minds to sin and forgiveness, may we be reconciled one to another as the Beloved Community. Amen.



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Session 5: Meaningful Conversations on Race

Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.

~ Psalm 106:3, New Revised Standard Version

Come now, let us argue it out.

~ Isaiah 1:18a, New Revised Standard Version

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray.

Video

Introduce the video, "Meaningful Conversations on Race."

The Rev. David Anderson Hooker outlines elements that hinder and help fruitful dialogue on issues of race in the "Meaningful Conversations on Race" video. In doing so, he traces how myths about race define how we function in life including work and school in the form of institutional racism. According to Dr. Hooker, when we avoid the hard conversations about race, we short-circuit any meaningful dialogue that can result in transformation in our lives and across the United States.

Questions

1. According to Dr. Hooker, people make three main arguments to avoid talking about race and racism. How do these arguments reflect your own lived experience or perspective on life?
2. How do negative feelings affect our willingness and ability to discuss the tough topics of racism, racial injustice, and white privilege?
3. In his dandelion-blue grass analogy, Dr. Hooker asserts that our systems are not neutral, but shaped by biases, tradition, histories, and practices, which is one reason that we consider dandelions weeds to destroy and prize bluegrass to create a beautiful lawn. Consider the following list and discuss how our perceptions of race and racial identity influence what we consider good/positive/appropriate/traditional appearance of:
 - A dating/marriage partner
 - A hardworking person
 - A safe neighborhood
 - Beautiful hair and skin
 - A reliable world leader
 - A cute baby
 - The "all-American" couple
 - The pastor I want to lead my congregation or ministry
 - A Sunday school teacher
 - Artists' renderings of Jesus, Mary, or Moses
 - A stained-glass depictions of Jesus as "The Good Shepherd"
 - A person I would vote for as mayor of my city or town
4. What are drawbacks of safe space in dialoguing about race and racism?
5. Dr. Anderson tells his story at end of the video concerning race and racism. Do you note any similarities or differences in our own stories?
6. How do your current church experiences in worship, outreach, mission, and witness prepare you to be in community with people of other races? What are some ways you are willing to work in your church to begin building ongoing relationships, Christian community, and space for honest dialogue across racial lines?

Next week

Prepare prayerfully to learn about "Continued Struggles in Race Relations" with Dr. Philip Klinkner.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Our God on high! Make plain to us what remains invisible to many concerning racist words, actions, and behavior. We seek you, God, to lead us in dismantling institutional racism and inequitable realities based on so many of our false myths. May we join, in agreement, as Christian sisters and brothers. Amen.



Session 6: Continued Struggles in Race Relations

And you must be responsible for the bodies of the powerful – the policeman who crack you with a nightstick will quickly find his excuse in your furtive movements. ... You cannot forget how much they transfigured our very bodies into sugar, tobacco, cotton, and gold.

~ Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (2015)

On this subject, I do not wish to think, or to speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; – but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest – I will not equivocate – I will not excuse – I will not retreat a single inch – AND I WILL BE HEARD."

~ William Lloyd Garrison, 1831

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray.

Video

Introduce the video, "Continued Struggles in Race Relations."

In "Continued Struggles in Race Relations," Dr. Phillip Klinkner confirms that the vestiges of racism for many people of color remain. Nor do the practices of institutions in the United States align with democratic ideals of liberty for all. Dr. Klinkner argues that the advance of equality has been unsteady with brief and isolated periods of improvement and long, steady stretches of stagnation and retreat.

Questions

1. What were the three periods of improvement for racial equality in U.S. history? During these periods, what indicated progress in equality?
2. From the 1940s, how did advocates for equality make comparisons between the fight for democracy abroad and the lack of democracy for African-Americans in the United States?
3. After the wars, how did retrenchment, retreat, and rollbacks increase inequality for African-Americans? Why did racist ideology make a comeback after the wars? How did people express such racist ideology?
4. Based on Dr. Klinkner's research and our knowledge, describe the role of the U.S. Christian churches and other religious institutions in the struggles for racial equality. If you were grading the church on forwarding racial justice, what would that grade be? Why?
5. What lessons have the abolitionists taught us in the face of hopelessness in dismantling racism? What can we learn from William Lloyd Garrison, who is quoted above?

Next week

Prepare prayerfully to learn about "The Intersections of Oppression" by Dr. Pamela Lightsey.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Almighty God, thank you for opening our eyes to the relationship between history and our lives today. May we lengthen the stretches of advancements in equality. Help us to speak up loudly fighting, act quickly and make lasting progress against racism. Amen.



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Session 7: The Intersections of Oppression

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.

~ W. E. B. Du Bois (1903)

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray.

Video

Introduce the video, "The Intersections of Oppression."

Dr. Pamela Lightsey explores intersectionality – the overlapping of social categories including race, class, and gender – in the context of her own life as a clergywoman, a lesbian, and an African-American woman. She uses her own history and experience as a lens for analyzing and understanding the racial strife in Ferguson, Mo., in her video "The Intersections of Oppression."

Questions

1. What does Dr. Lightsey's anecdotal experience as a clergywoman, a lesbian, and an African-American woman say about the state of the Church when it comes to the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity/race?
2. How can we embrace and act on the doctrine of the Imago Dei relationship to the sacred worth of all people?
3. What does it mean to oppress others when we are all of sacred worth, all part of God's created work?
4. Why are the implications of intersectionality based on social constructs in Ferguson? What have been some of the practical implications for people in Ferguson?
5. How is intersectionality helpful as a tool for social justice activists?
6. How is patriarchy being addressed in leadership roles for African-American women in Ferguson? Why is the shift from patriarchy important, including the history of Civil Rights?
7. How has the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) community qualified the "Black Lives Matter" movement? What are some places of intersectionality with LGBTQ persons and their allies?
8. What can we Christians do in response to the oppression of intersectionality?

Next week

Prepare prayerfully to learn about "The Building of Bridges to Community" with the Rev. Cynthia Moore- Koikoi.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Christ, our Savior and the Prince of Peace, we pray for all who are in the midst of civil unrest and violence in places like Ferguson. Continue to open our hearts to the implications of intersectionality to people of color oppressed by racism. May we continue to speak up and act on behalf of the oppressed. Amen.



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Session 8: The Building of Bridges to Community

Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.

~ Psalm 106:3, New Revised Standard Version

You shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

~ Isaiah 58:12b, New Revised Standard Version

Check-in

Ask about everyone's week, along with prayers for joys and sorrows.

Prayer

Ask a volunteer to pray.

Video

Introduce the video, "The Building of Bridges to Community."

The Rev. Cynthia Moore-Koikoi shares her experiences in the broader context of racial strife in the video "The Building of Bridges to Community." She challenges viewers to reach out and build relationships in their respective communities through the lens of her service and experience in racially torn Baltimore. She prophetically calls all of us in the Church to be sources of hope and redemption to communities in conflict. She calls us to witness to God's love and justice in the midst of civil unrest and protest in embattled places like Baltimore.

Questions

1. How can prayer walks uplift those praying and those for whom we pray in the community? How can we frame our prayers, including prayer walks, for ethnic-specific and multicultural communities?
2. As a church, what barriers stop us from moving forward in urban communities?
3. How has the "fence," both figurative and literal, created barriers that led to the civil unrest and protest against racism in Baltimore?
4. What are the fences of little or no socioeconomic mobility for African-Americans in the city? What barriers isolate us?
5. What role does the Church play in erecting and supporting fences/barriers? How can we tear down those fences? What are the institutional fences in The United Methodist Church as a denomination?
6. How did the figurative fences come down when Christian leaders walked and prayed through Baltimore? How was community created? What was the importance of hope in one of the outcomes of prayer and community?
7. What are you prepared to do in response to racism in the United States and in our churches? How can we fully support urban ministries and the pastors in those ministries and – by extension – be a strong beacon for equality, identifying the fences?

Next week

Prepare prayerfully to celebrate what you have learned during this study and to determine next steps.

Closing prayer (in unison) – Light a candle as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit

Creator God, our provider, we humbly seek you as we agree to continue to speak up and be active against the sin of racism. Help us to be strong in a difficult journey. Lift up everyone in this group as we continue to learn about and act against racism even as this group ends. Amen.



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Resources

Books

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*.

Brown, Kelly Douglas. *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*.

De La Torre, Miguel A. *The Politics of Jesús: A Hispanic Political Theology*.

Deymaz, Mark and Okuwobi, Oneya Fennell. *Multi-Ethnic Christian Primer: An Eight-Week Guide to Walking, Working and Worshipping God Together as One*.

DiAngelo, Robin. *What Does It Mean to Be White?: Developing White Racial Literacy*.

Harvey, Jennifer. *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation*.

Irving, Debby. *Waking up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*.

Johnson, Allan G. *Power, Privilege, and Race*.

Lee, Enid, et al. *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development*.

Takaki, Ronald. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*.

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Walden, Ken and Lattimore, Virgil L. III. *Practical Theology of Church Diversity: A Guide for Clergy and Congregations*.

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Wise, Tim. *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*.

Websites

Robin DiAngelo: <http://robindiangelo.com>

General Commission on Religion and Race resources: <http://gcorr.org/resources>

Shelly Tochluk: <http://shellytochluk.com>

Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."
<https://www.deanza.edu/faculty/lewisjulie/White%20Priviledge%20Unpacking%20the%20Invisible%20Knapsack.pdf>

Biographies of Presenters

Dr. Robin DiAngelo, the author of *What Does It Mean to Be White? Developing White Racial Literacy*, has been an anti-racist educator and has heard justifications of racism by white men and women in her workshops for more than two decades. This justification, which she calls "white fragility," is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include outward displays of emotions such as anger, fear and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence and leaving the stress-inducing situation. The Rev. Miguel De La Torre is a professor of social ethics and Latino/a studies at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Born in Cuba and ordained in the Southern Baptist Church, he is a prolific author, engaging speaker and inspiring scholar activist. He has written many books and articles, including the popular *Reading the Bible from the Margins*. He has been an expert commentator concerning ethical issues related to Hispanic religiosity, LGBTQ civil rights and immigration rights, and has appeared in several local, national and international media outlets. He is well known for his unique approach of religiously analyzing social issues from the perspective of the dispossessed and disenfranchised.

The Rev. Glen Chebon Kernell Jr. is the executive secretary of Native American and indigenous ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church. In this role, he spends half of his time serving as the coordinator for the United Methodist Council of Bishops effort to fulfill the General Conference resolution mandating an ongoing process to improve relations with indigenous persons through dialogue, study, and local or regional acts of repentance. He spends the other half of his time raising awareness, increasing advocacy and supporting the empowerment of Native American and indigenous communities globally. He is an ordained elder in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

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Dr. Phillip Klinkner is a political scientist, blogger and author. He is noted for his work on American political parties and elections, race and politics, and political history. He is currently the James S. Sherman Professor of Government at Hamilton College in central New York. In his most recent book, *The Unsteady March*, he and his coauthor, Rogers Smith, argue that America's record of race relations cannot be categorized as consistent, gradual advancement toward equality but rather as a series of dramatic moments where multiple factors aligned to advance or hinder progress. The book won the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute's Horace Mann Bond Book Award and was a semifinalist for the 2000 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award.

The Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey serves as the associate dean for Community Life and Lifelong Learning at Boston University's School of Theology (a United Methodist seminary) where she is also the clinical assistant professor of Contextual Theology and Practice. Dr. Lightsey is a scholar, social justice activist, and military veteran whose academic and research interests include: classical and contemporary just war theory, womanist theology, queer theory and theology, and African American religious history and theologies. An ordained elder in the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church, Dr. Lightsey has pastored local churches and is a sought after writer, speaker, and organizer. She is currently serving as co-chair of the American Academy of Religion's Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Group, and she is on the board of Reconciling Ministries Network. Dr. Lightsey has been a strong presence of support and advocacy in Ferguson, Mo., where racial injustice persists.

The Rev. Cynthia Moore-Koikoi is the district superintendent for the Baltimore Metropolitan District in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. In her role as district superintendent she continually challenges churches to reach out and develop relationships with the surrounding community. Rev. Moore-Koikoi knows first hand how the Church can be a source of hope and redemption in communities embroiled in conflict. Most recently, she called upon the Church to step up and be a witness to the love and justice of God amidst protests and civil unrest that erupted in Baltimore after the death of Freddie Gray, an African American man who died in police custody.

About the Author

The Rev. Dianne Glave is coordinator of diversity development and inclusion for the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church. She completed her Master of Divinity degree at Candler School of Theology at Emory University and earned a Ph. D. in history. She served as pastor of local congregations before taking her current position. She has also served as a professor in African-American and ethnic studies. Her publications include *Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage* and *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African-American Environmental History*.