



Dr. Katelin Hansen

Being a White Ally with People of Color

Video (9:09): Dr. Katelin Hansen, director of experiential learning for the faith-based nonprofit agency, Community Development for All People, and director of music for the United Methodist Church for All People

Katelin Hansen serves as the director of experiential learning for the faith-based nonprofit agency, Community Development for All People. She is also director of music for the United Methodist Church for All People, a multirace, multiclass church in Columbus, Ohio where she interweaves a wide array of music styles into each service. Her blog, *By Their Strange Fruit*, is an online ministry facilitating justice and reconciliation across racial divides. She received her doctorate in neuroscience from the Ohio State University in Columbus, OH.

Being a White Ally with People of Color

Preparation

Select a room or location to offer the study. Every session needs a room that has the capability to access the video via the Internet and to project the video for groups of various sizes. Check to be sure equipment is working properly. *This video can be found at www.gcorr.org/series/vc3.*

Preview the video. Read through the lesson plan. Have the covenant of care for display or sharing for the session.

Do some research about the different kinds of generations (i.e., iGen, Gen Z or Centennials, born 1996 and later; Millennials or Gen Y, born 1977 to 1995; Generation X, born 1965 to 1976; Baby Boomers, born 1946 to 1964; and Traditionalists or Silent Generation, born 1945 and before).

Read about the generations at www.genhq.com/faq-info-about-generations and make notes about the characteristics of these generations. Also, visit Katelin Hansen's blog, <http://bytheirstrangefruit.blogspot.com>. Read through a few of her weekly posts. Make notes on some ideas to share with the class as part of the proposed research project.

Gather the following materials:

- Bible for reading the Scriptures – Matthew 7:15-20 and Luke 13:6-9
- Listening and Looking Guide (one copy for each person or project on a screen)
- *United Methodist Hymnal*, #378 Amazing Grace and #451 Be Thou My Vision
- Pens and pencils
- Hand mirror
- CD player (or smartphone or tablet) and a CD of soft, instrumental music (optional)

THE STUDY SESSION

Get Started [10 minutes]

Welcome everyone to the session. (Take care of housekeeping matters such as break times and location of bathrooms, etc.). Read the following statement of purpose (or recruit a volunteer to do so): “The General Commission on Religion and Race presents *Vital Conversations* to help start the dialogue on subjects that may sometimes be difficult to approach. We are all part of the beloved community, and we welcome perspectives that bring enlightenment and understanding.”

Begin the study session by inviting people to share their first name, their generation (Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennial, Gen Y, etc.), and a favorite characteristic about their generation. Introduce yourself, share your generation, and explain why you have accepted the role of facilitator and your visions for the time together.

Introduce the video presenter: Dr. Katelin Hansen is a neuroscientist and a United Methodist laywoman in ministry. Dubbing herself as an “illusive Millennial that the church is always worried about,” she shares her journey to various forms of ministry, away from her “precise and structured” science background to a full-fledged commitment to ministry. She says, “Jesus is a troublemaker, and he would not let me go.” She writes the blog, “*By Their Strange Fruit*.”

Lead the group in singing stanza one of the hymn “Amazing Grace,” No. 378 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*. Ask someone to read aloud these Scriptures: Matthew 7:15-20 and Luke 13:6-9. Invite someone to lead the group in prayer; if no one volunteers, open with a prayer of your choice.

Read aloud and post a covenant that the group has created and highlight the key components: confidentiality; everyone's voice matters; disagree with care and do not attack anyone. Invite the group to add thoughts and ideas to the covenant.

Distribute the Listening and Looking Guide. Explain that this is a resource to help them capture thoughts and ideas from the video presentation as well as a place to make note of visions they have for ministry. Allow time for them to scan the questions to help focus the viewing and listening process.

Play the Video [15-20 minutes]

Encourage participants to jot down short notes on their guide but as much as possible remain attentive to listening to and experiencing the presentation. At the conclusion of the video, allow 5-10 minutes for the group to add more information and answer questions on their Listening and Looking Guide. Tell the group that there will be opportunities to add more information to the sheet and to reflect upon their notes. (You may show the video twice if time permits and the group agrees.)

Open Mic: Stand and Share [15 minutes]

Invite people to share responses from two answers on their Listening and Looking Guide:

- What are the key values that are fundamental to their souls?
- State what meaning they found in the following sentence: “I learned the history that wasn’t taught to me.”

Research/Review [20 minutes]

Divide the participants into two groups by choosing between the following two options. Allow the groups ten minutes to complete the selected task:

- Use your smartphone, tablet or laptop to find and read at least one of Dr. Hansen’s posts on her blog, *By Their Strange Fruit*, <http://bytheirstrangefruit.blogspot.com>. Make note of one or two key points or new ideas.
- Write a few sentences about people or organizations that you know who are about the business of doing “diligent and good work for justice and reconciliation.” (The General Commission on Religion and Race may be one of them).

Call the group back together and hear reports from the research and review process. Encourage members to make connections between their research and knowledge base with Dr. Hansen’s experiences. (As the facilitator, be prepared to add to those connections.)

Reflect and Share [10 minutes]

Ask members to review the information recorded on the guide sheet. Add additional thoughts, complete their vision, their commitment, and begin to draft their social media share. Invite anyone who wishes to share their commitment to do so after a time of individual reflection.

Closing Meditation [10 minutes]

Ask group members to sit in a circle. Bring out the hand mirror and say to the group: “Katelin Hansen said her pastor challenged her as she was preparing to advance her career as a neuroscientist, telling her, ‘I just want you to hold a mirror to your life and how you are spending all your extra time, all your extra energy, your passion. I think you might have some tough choices about your life path ahead.’”

Then say, “I am asking you to take this mirror, hold it in front of your face, take a long look, and ask, ‘God, what is the tough thing You would have me to do in becoming an ally with people whose color or experiences may be different than mine?’”

If you are using music, begin playing soft music. Pass the mirror to one participant, ask her or him to take a good look, and ask the question: “God, what is the tough thing You would have me to do?” before silently passing to the person to the left. Each person, after taking a look, should sit quietly seeking God’s will and discernment until everyone has held the mirror and raised the question. (Note: If the group is larger than ten persons, pass two mirrors.)

After everyone has had a chance to look in the mirror and engage in a time of silence and contemplation, begin singing this hymn of dedication (or ask a volunteer song leader), “Be Thou My Vision” No. 451, *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

Finally, close with this prayer or one of your choosing:

God, be Thou our vision so that we may not be colorblind, so we can clearly see our sisters and brothers in the array of skin tones that You have granted us. God, be our vision so that we may clearly see – if just for a day or a month or a year – the path, the direction You want our lives to take. Be Thou our vision so that we may see Thee more clearly and follow Thee more dearly – day by day. We belong to the generation that would rather seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with You. Use us Lord. In the name of our Savior and Lord, Amen.

Listening and Looking Guide: Dr. Katelin Hansen

Reflection: In what way do you see a link between the words of the hymn, “Amazing Grace” and the presenter’s experiences?

Dr. Hansen discusses the choice that she and her husband made to join and worship at the United Methodist Church for All People so that they would not “deprive their souls” of God’s majesty by isolating themselves among believers of similar backgrounds. In what way(s) is your soul deprived?

In what way(s) is your soul fed?

Dr. Hansen mentioned adopting a value of downward mobility, not as a charitable endeavor, but as something fundamental to her soul. Jot down one or two values that are fundamental to your soul:

Katelin Hansen said, “I learned the history that wasn’t taught to me.” What history have you learned recently that was not taught to you (in school)?

Complete the statement: “I am of the generation that _____”

Describe a new vision that you want your church to claim:

Make a commitment: _____

Tweet This/Post on your social media: _____

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