



RELIGION & RACE

General Commission on Religion and Race

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Racial Justice Conversations Guide

Are you seeking ways to engage others in difficult, but important, conversations—such as the topic of white privilege and/or racial inequality? The following resources are intended to help get you started and create building blocks for additional work.

Suggested Opening Prayer

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, it is indeed YOU that have brought us thus far. As we gather together to discuss important, but difficult, challenges such as white privilege and racial inequality, make us mindful of the gift of life in spite of the hate present in the world.

Remind us of the goodness of people in spite of the sins that we commit against one another—sins that come from brokenness and our own inability to see you reflected in each another.

Forgive us, God, for the ways in which we have been complicit in creating anything other than the Beloved Community. Make us ever mindful to do the work of justice and be a body of peace in this world—a world ripped apart by conflict, war, famine, violence, guns, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, ageism, genocide, poverty, and privilege.

THIS is a new day you have given us. May we begin again and recommit ourselves to removing barriers where we find them—on state houses and in prisons, on mountaintops and in classrooms, on continents and in churches.

We pray to you on this day and all the days ahead to keep us forever in the path.

Amen.

– Adapted from a prayer created by Rev. Amy Stapleton

Suggested Ground Rules

Do No Harm

- ✓ Think before you speak.
- ✓ Beware of judging yourself and others harshly and unfairly.

Do Good

- ✓ Own your thoughts and beliefs by using “I” statements.
- ✓ Listen with a compassionate and curious heart to others especially when their experience and views are different.

Stay in Love with God

- ✓ Pray for one another and this gathering.
- ✓ Be faithful in word and deed to your commitment to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.



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Scripture Lesson

Luke 10:30-37 (The Parable of the Good Samaritan)

This parable is packed with invisible truths of our lives.

- How do we identify the 'neighbor' in our own lives?
- How do personal prejudices or cultural norms determine the actions we take?
- How can we relate this parable to stories in our present culture?
- How can we encourage a response of hospitality to all in and outside of our churches and communities?

Questions for Reflection

- Why is it important for white people to talk to one another about racial inequality and unearned privilege?
- How does the Holy Bible address racial/ethnic/cultural differences in biblical times? (Who was privileged and who was "the other" in the Old and New Testaments?)
- What teachings of Jesus might be helpful to recall as we discuss our own white privilege?
- Everyone has a story shared journey. What has shaped and informed your sense of difference and understandings of race?
- Where can we identify signs of hope as we begin to recognize the presence of God—and our very selves—in those whom we deny equal access?

Next Steps

- Provide participants with pieces of paper and pens. Invite them to write down at least one way in which they will commit to working toward racial healing, justice, and racial equality. Ask everyone to place his or her commitment statements in a shared container or the middle of the table.
- Ask the group to join in a prayer over these personal commitments.
- Invite everyone to reflect on what they discovered during this journey toward truth and wholeness.
- Establish a time to reconvene and build upon the work that was created today.