



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Racial Justice Teach-In

PART 1

Suggestions for Facilitators

- If you are watching this Teach-In as part of a Sunday school class, Part 1 will likely extend past your allotted time limit for one class. We suggest giving each part 2 weeks and either breaking the video into two parts (just after the 40 minute mark is a good pausing point for Part 1), or watching the bulk of the video in one week and having discussion in the second week.
- Consider beginning each session with a few verses of scripture, a grounding prayer, or silent meditation.
- Below we offer a sample set of questions to guide you in conversation. Please feel free to adapt or adjust for the particular dynamics of your group.
- This discussion guide is intended to offer a framework for your conversations about racism and white supremacy. We encourage you to dig into the work and consider how the content is relevant for your particular setting.

Conversation Guidelines

- Seek knowledge about yourself and others. Every conversation is a chance to learn.
- Use “I” messages. Speak from your own experiences.
- Experience discomfort. Talking about race does not create divisions itself. Talking about race opens doors.
- Say “ouch” when something bothers you. Explain or write how you feel.
- Breathe: This conversation is a beginning. We will not finish today.

From Challenging Racism: Getting Started through Stories and Conversations (challengingracism.org)

Schedule

- Introductions:
State your name, your pronouns, and name one reason you are participating in this event.
- Watch Part 1 of the Teach-In (If you are breaking the video into two parts, 40 minutes in is a good place to pause)
- Discussion/Reflection

Special thanks to Blair Moorhead and the folks at Clarendon Presbyterian Church for your collaboration on the content and glossary for this guide.

Discussion/Reflection

1. What have you had the strongest reaction to so far? How do you now understand the concept white supremacy (definition, how it operates in areas of life that you can observe)?

2. In the video, the trainers discuss the difference between understanding white supremacy as individual acts by specific people versus seeing it as a systemic issue that is supported and maintained through a lack of critical examination. If this is a new concept for you, how does it change your understanding of racism and white supremacy?

3. Does taking an intersectional approach to understanding white supremacy change your perspective? If so, how so?

4. How does white supremacy benefit you? How does it harm you?

5. What does standing in solidarity with marginalized groups you are not a part of look like for you? If you are part of a marginalized group, how have you seen others stand in solidarity with you in helpful or unhelpful ways?

6. Doing anti-racism work over the long-term requires that we have a system of accountability in place if we are to make any progress. How do you define accountability in this work?

7. What is your key takeaway from the Racial Justice Teach-In, Part 1 (or segment) you just watched? What is resonating with you and what do you most want to enact from this conversation?

NOTES

Glossary

Doctrine of Discovery: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) called the church to confess its complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery. The action also called for a review of the history of the doctrine and the writing of a report on the doctrine. The Doctrine of Discovery was first articulated in 1452 by Pope Nicholas V as the Papal Bull “Dum Diversas” and in 1496 by King Henry VII of England as a patent granted to John Cabot, which authorized and justified the destruction, killing, and appropriating of the lands of indigenous peoples and nations. The Doctrine of Discovery was incorporated into U.S. law in the 19th century when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case, *Johnson vs McIntosh*, 1823, stating that European nations had assumed dominion over the lands of America upon discovery and as a result Native Americans had lost their rights to complete sovereignty as independent nations and retained a mere right of occupancy in their lands.

A U.S. Supreme Court case as recent as 2005, *City of Sherrill v. Oneida Nation of Indians*, utilized the Doctrine of Discovery as legal precedent for the final decision. This doctrine laid the groundwork for the genocide of indigenous peoples around the world; the colonization of Africa, Asia, Australia, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas; and the transatlantic trafficking in persons used as slave labor.

In recent years, partly in response to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, faith communities, including the World Council of Churches, have begun to examine the Doctrine of Discovery critically. This study has led the WCC and denominations in the United States to repudiate the doctrine. (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-equity-womens-interculturalministries/gender-and-racial-justice-ministries/doctrine-of-discovery/>)

Intersectionality: A term introduced by legal scholar Kimberle’ Crenshaw, intersectionality is a framework for understanding the ways that multiple aspects of our identities intersect, influence one another, and compound to create unique experiences. The concept is regularly used to describe the ways that societal privilege and oppression are complicated by the different parts of our identity that are marginalized or privileged in society.

Orientalism: Orientalism is ‘a manner of regularized (or Orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient.’ It is the image of the ‘Orient’ expressed as an entire system of thought and scholarship. The Orient signifies a system of representations framed by political forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and Western empire. The Orient exists for the West, and is constructed by and in relation to the West. It is a mirror image of what is inferior and alien (‘Other’) to the West. The “Oriental” is the person represented by such thinking. . . The “Oriental” is a single image, a sweeping generalization, and a stereotype that crosses countless cultural and national boundaries. (<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/21/orientalism/>)

White Privilege: White privilege is unearned benefit to white people that comes as a result of white supremacy and systemic racism. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. (*Presbyterian Church USA. “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community Churchwide Antiracism Policy.” Presbyterian Church Facing Racism, facingracism.org/.*)

Suggested Resources

Podcasts:

Amicus (Slate)
Code Switch (NPR)
Deconstructed (The Intercept)

Thinkers/Theologians/Movements to read and follow on social media:

Black Lives Matter, (@Blklivesmatter)
Rev. Dr. Valerie Bridgeman, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Methodist Theological School in Ohio (@DrValerieB)
Dr. Anthea Butler, University of Pennsylvania (@AntheaButler)
Rev. Dr. Yvette Flunder, Presiding Bishop, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries
Dr. Christine Hong, Columbia Theological Seminary
Shaun King, Real Justice PAC (@ShaunKing)
Dr. June Lorenzo, Pueblo of Laguna
Roland Martin, journalist/author (@RolandSMartin)
Dr. Raj Nadella, Columbia Theological Seminary
Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray Jr., Chicago Theological Seminary
Dr. Patrick Reyes, Forum for Theological Exploration
Dr. Andrea Smith, University of California, Riverside, Author of: "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy"
Rev. Gregory Timmons, Calvary Church in Flint, MI

