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WHITE PRIVILEGE
let's talk

A Resource for Transformational Dialogue

God is still speaking,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk

Facilitator Guide

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introduction

Facilitating

Facilitators

It is important to have facilitators for these conversations. The most successful facilitators are persons who do not function as the group's expert on race but rather are passionate about having conversation, open to new ideas, careful listeners, attentive to nonverbal communication, and comfortable with the complexity and tensions that surface when discussing race.

While having one facilitator is adequate, having two group facilitators is ideal. Co-facilitators often feel more confident and are able to accent one another's leadership strengths as well as offer wider insights as conversation unfolds.

The Structure of Each Gathering

Each gathering will follow a similar pattern. A beginning centering exercise will invite folks to be present and implicitly teach that these are sacred conversations that invite our full selves—mind, body, and spirit—to be present. Each gathering has an icebreaker to help participants learn one another's names and begin talking, and then moves into a time of story sharing. These elements are meant to help the group set the tone for the conversation.

As the group moves to the material for the week, they'll find media to engage together, discussion questions, activities, and a sending forth, which includes a handout explaining how participants can prepare for the next gathering together.

This curriculum is centered on story: the stories of the writers as well as the stories of the participants. As a part of the curriculum, each participant will be composing a spiritual autobiography written through the lens of race. Each week they will be asked to reflect and journal on a few questions about their own history. In the fifth gathering, they'll be invited to combine their journal entries as well as to add additional stories to form a more comprehensive autobiography attentive to how race, privilege, and power have impacted their life's story. Participants will be invited to share them with the group.

This exercise helps participants synthesize their learning about themselves and the systems and stories that have impacted them. Participants have experienced the practice of truth telling to be healing. Some have found it to be a meaningful beginning point for understanding the way race and privilege impacts their life. Many have found it to be the most transformative part of these gatherings.

Group Covenant or Ground Rules

You'll find lesson plans for this in the first week. This is important for helping participants interact with each other and allowing discussion to move forward in productive ways. A covenant or group ground rules also help the facilitator address behavior that is inhibiting or shutting down group process or conversation.

Be Attentive to Body Language

People communicate not only with their words but also with their bodies. A person sitting with their hands folded across their chest might be communicating apprehension or skepticism. A person maintaining eye contact and nodding along as someone speaks indicates interest and acknowledges listening.

Paying attention to participants' body language can help facilitators check in with those expressing discomfort. Asking participants to pay attention to their own body language can help foster better conversation and relationships.

introduction

Facilitating

Help Balance Talking Time

Some people have an easy time speaking in groups while others do not. Some people are extroverted. Some people more introverted. Some process information by speaking their thoughts as they figure them out. Some people formulate thoughts before speaking them aloud or tend to find writing more accessible. Discussion groups tend to favor some communication styles over others; so be attentive to who isn't getting a chance to speak, and check in with them. Help participants to self monitor their contributions to conversation.

Emotions

Crying is okay. Have tissues on hand. Anger is okay, as are frustration, hurt, sorrow, and the rest. Emotions should be welcomed and honored as people share their thoughts, feelings, and stories. Sometimes one person's emotions will rub another person the wrong way or one person will try to "fix" another. Help people honor and seek to understand their own and others' emotions.

Remember, these conversations may challenge what people know and believe about themselves, the people they love, and the world in which they live. It may rock some people to their core. Be gentle with their spirits. Acknowledge their feelings or hold loving silence when that's what's needed. Remember, we're asking them to engage in hard conversations.

"What if someone says..."

Facilitators often wonder the best way to respond when someone says something upsetting or insensitive, or when someone uses a stock phrase to question the premise of the conversation. This might sound like someone saying, "I don't see race" or "I'm white but don't have privilege," or making a comment based on stereotypes. These comments lead to uncomfortable, or even intimidating, moments. As a facilitator, your responsibility is not to have the perfect retort but rather to be able to help participants question why they've said what they've said and understand its impact.

So ask questions. Be curious about what's behind their statement or their intentions in saying it. For instance, someone who claims they don't see race isn't telling you they have trouble with their eyesight. They are likely trying to say that they are not prejudiced or that they don't judge people based on race. However, what they might not yet see is that by pretending not to see race, they are shutting down the opportunity to learn how someone's race affects their experiences or how they are treated. They also may not have considered that prejudices about race can only be confronted by first acknowledging people have different colored skin.

So be curious. Help participants question their own assumptions. Ask questions that allow participants to analyze their intentions. Exercise grace as facilitators and learners work together through these vital conversations.

introduction

Logistics

Group Composition

This curriculum was designed to help white people to see and understand how white privilege functions in the United States. As the curriculum's introduction states, "If you are a person of color in America, the seeing of privilege is inescapable. If you are white, you have most likely not been conditioned to even look for, much less see, where your privilege functions."

Some settings will have groups composed of people with racially diverse experiences and backgrounds. In these groups, it is suggested that there be more than one person of a particular racial group in your gathering. This lessens (though certainly does not eliminate) the potential that any one person is isolated, put on the spot, or is expected to represent an entire group.

Some settings will have groups composed entirely of white people and will still be able to engage the stories of a variety of people, including people of color, through the curriculum's readings and other media. It is common for a group composed entirely of white people to express a desire for greater racial diversity within the group. This may indicate awareness that diversity is a gift and there is much to be gained by conversation among people of different backgrounds and experiences. But it may also indicate a pattern often replicated in discussions about race where white people try to avoid reflection on their own race and instead consciously or unconsciously ask people of color to be their educators.

It will be worthwhile to discuss and pay attention to how the composition of the group impacts the conversation and learning and to make adjustments to your conversations if needed.

Size

It is recommended that your discussion group be limited to ten or fewer people. This will allow a comfortable amount of time for people to share and discuss. If you decide to have larger groups, consider subdividing for some of the discussions or plan a longer duration for your meeting.

Setting up Your Space

It may seem trivial, but your conversations will be greatly impacted by your space. A clean, friendly space with privacy, good lighting, and enough space for chairs to be arranged in a circle will go a long way towards helping participants feel more comfortable and better able to converse. Providing hospitality like tea, coffee, and light snacks is nice to set the tone of the gathering.

Determining the Schedule

The facilitation guide is set up as a six-session series during which each gathering lasts an hour and a half. Because this work is highly contextual, you may determine that your context would benefit from a different schedule. As you invite people into this work, be upfront about the time commitment you are asking them to make. Additionally, be attentive and honor the group's scheduled beginning and ending times. Encourage participants to do likewise.

introduction

Guiding Principles For Facilitating

Give Yourself Permission to Not Know Everything

Most people know less about race than they think they do. You will be a co-learner, learning about yourself and the systems that have privileged white people in our country.

When something arises that you do not know or are unfamiliar with, take note and do some homework and encourage others in the group to do the same.

Share Your Own Story and Experiences

Modeling how to tell your story thoughtfully, truthfully, and deeply sets the tone for the group and allows others to have the courage to share in similar ways. Everyone, whether they are a person of color or a white person, has had a racial experience.

Creating an opportunity for those stories to be shared and their emotional core expressed will make for more meaningful and transformative conversations.

Role of Listening

Use the conversation for learning about others by carefully listening and encouraging participants to do the same. Listening is key in these conversations. Listening to not only what is being said but also the emotion behind the words is vital. Listen intently and resist formulating a response to what participants are saying so that you can truly listen to all they are saying. Try to listen without anticipating the conclusion.

Practice the Art of Making Mistakes with Grace

As you open yourself to these conversations about race and privilege, you will likely say things that bother or offend someone in the group. These moments are great learning opportunities because they allow you to see how your actions and words affect others.

Rather than trying to dismiss the conflict by explaining you didn't mean to hurt their feelings, practice humility and grace. Acknowledge you've hurt or angered them and invite further conversation to understand why.

Spend Time n Reflection Afterward

Growth happens both in the midst of these conversations and outside them as you reflect on the interactions, your feelings, your learning, and the stories that have been shared. Carve out some intentional time for personal reflection in between sessions.

WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk

vocabulary

Discrimination
The denial of justice and fair treatment by both individuals and institutions in many areas, including employment, education, housing, banking and political rights. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking.

Erasure
The act of denying or refusing to acknowledge that people's race and people's lived experience in America because of their race differs. This is reflected in statements like, "I don't see race," "I'm colorblind," "We are all equal," and "But we're all just one human race."

Implicit Bias
The unconscious attitudes, stereotypes, and unintentional actions (positive or negative) towards members of a group merely because of their membership in that group. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime through exposure to direct and indirect messages. When people are acting out of their implicit bias, they are not even aware that their actions are biased. In fact, those biases may be in direct conflict with a person's explicit beliefs and values.

Microaggressions
The result of implicit bias wherein a statement, action, or incident is indirectly or subtly (often unconsciously) reflective of prejudice. An example would be a person clutching their bag as they walk by a black man.

Prejudice
Prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes.

Stereotype
An oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a specific positive trait can have negative consequences.

Racism
Power + Prejudice = Racism. Racism describes the result of prejudicial attitudes being combined with the power to dominate and control the systems and institutions capable of carrying out discriminatory practices. In other words, racism results from access to the power to enforce prejudices so as to advantage one racial group.

White Fragility
The defensiveness and avoidance that arise for white people when facing even a minimum amount of racial stress. The feelings can be so uncomfortable that white people distance themselves from engaging or actively shut down conversations about race. It may surface as the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation.

White Privilege
The term for the way people and social institutions grant social privileges that benefit white people beyond what is commonly experienced by people of color under the same social, political, or economic circumstances. White privilege is not something that white people necessarily do, create, or enjoy on purpose. It refers more to the phenomenon that social systems award preference based on the presumptions of white as norm.

Definitions assembled and adapted from the work of the Anti-Defamation League, Southern Poverty Law Center, Robin DiAngelo, and *White Privilege: Let's Talk*.

first gathering

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

prepare

What's behind all this?

When activist and writer Peggy McIntosh published "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" in 1988, she made white privilege visible. Her writing explored the myriad of ways navigating America in white skin had certain advantages not experienced by the people of color around her. She made a list of advantages she could identify that seemed to be based more on her race, than on her class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though she acknowledges that the privileges of one part of her identity can and do overlap with others.

Her paper made waves and shifted the dialogue about race and racism in America. She challenged the binary of good/bad, racist/not racist that permeates conversations about race. She named that racism (and other -isms) can take both active forms, which can be seen, and embedded forms, which members of the dominant groups are taught not to see. She reflected on her own upbringing, and being taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of one group against another. Never was she taught to recognize racism in the invisible systems that conferred unsought preference for white people simply because of their race.

What she proposed in her writing was that disapproving of the systems that privilege whites will not be enough to change the system. Racism will not simply end if white people change their attitudes because racism is racial discrimination coupled with societal power. The systems that benefit white people in obtaining jobs, housing, healthcare, education, etc. must themselves be challenged, disempowered, and changed. While individual acts can help, they cannot end these systemic problems.

Therefore, addressing the problems of racism requires first seeing the systems of power in place and their colossal unseen dimensions that create and perpetuate privilege.

This curriculum is intended to help people to "see" power and privilege, their manifestations and their impacts. Only after getting honest about how white privilege has functioned and continues to be perpetuated, can there be dialogue about how to address its causes and the necessary reparations and redistribution of power and opportunity.

Materials needed for this gathering

- Post-its (if using the first approach to create a group covenant)
- Printout of initial group guidelines (if using the alternative approach to create a group covenant)
- Journals and pens
- Equipment to stream or play video from the internet

Where is this going?

Participants will learn definitions and basic concepts of white privilege, some of its manifestations in the social system, and its impact.

They'll also write a group covenant to outline ground rules needed for meaningful dialogue and learning.

Participants' Perspectives

The participants probably vary in their backgrounds, their previous study and reflection on race and privilege, and their comfort level in talking about race and privilege. Some are likely a part of this study because they understand it to be important to talk about; others likely come in skeptical that white privilege even exists.

Keep in mind also that having deep conversations about race and about privilege may be brand new to participants. It may feel threatening. As Peggy McIntosh notes, most white people are trained from a young age not to see their own privileges. Instead, they are brought up with the myth of meritocracy, the myth that choice and opportunity are equally available to all. This myth keeps many white people unaware that mobility and freedom of action are also dependent on resources and opportunities that are given to some and systematically denied to others.

Challenging any long-held myth can be quite difficult for people. Cognitive dissonance and participants' resistance to questioning that myth will be real. An engagement both of data as well as personal story will go a long way to helping participants reflect.

Some white participants may also see racism as something that is a problem for people of color but not them. They may need help seeing that their own well-being is tied up with this conversation. Racism is damaging to them as well. Racism keeps white people fearful of persons of color, inhibits the building of deep relationships, keeps stereotypical thinking in place, and damages their humanity as they see other people suffering needlessly.

Consider this...

"The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads."

-Gloria Anzaldúa

welcome

Gathering

Give participants an opportunity to learn one another's names and a bit more about one another at each session. Allowing participants an opportunity to share about themselves in more casual ways at the beginning helps participants feel more comfortable speaking later.

Invite participants to share their name, their favorite road sign, and in a sentence or two, why it is their favorite.

Keep this sharing to a sentence or two.

Centering Practice

Choose a centering practice from Spiritual Practice Resources at the back of the facilitator guide. These centering practices are an opportunity to help participants transition from the busyness of their lives into this space and time together and to be in the moment.

The Focus

Let the participants know the focus for time together. In today's gathering, the groundwork needed for fruitful dialogue is being laid.

Participants will

- Work together to establish a group covenant and process for dialogue.
- Be introduced to the practice of examining and reflecting on white privilege.
- Be introduced to definitions and the conceptual framework behind the term *white privilege* so that they have a common, working understanding.
- Begin to dialogue with one another about their own experiences of race.

Activity: Develop Group Covenant

It is important for the participants to develop a group covenant or an agreed upon set of guidelines. Including expectations about attendance, listening to others, confidentiality, conflict, etc. helps the group understand how it will function together

- Divide participants up into three or four, each with a stack of post-it notes. Ask them to brainstorm elements they would include on a group covenant and include a guideline on each post-it. Give the groups time to work.

Consider this...

Oops and Ouch Rule

Say "**OOPS**" to acknowledge when you may unintentionally say something and wish you had not.

Say "**OUCH**" when someone's words or actions offend you. Ouch should not be used simply when someone disagrees with what's been said, but only when they are offended or personally attacked.

If your group uses this rule, explain that this will suspend conversation for a moment, during which you'll ask the participant about the "ouch" and then encourage participants involved to further discuss the issue at a break. It is important the facilitator does not ask the participant who made the offensive comment to explain or justify their statements, which sets the dialogue up to become a debate.

Keep the creation of the group covenant to about 20 minutes to allow ample time for the remaining activities.

- Regather as a large group and begin conversation about what the groups came up with. Work together to find commonalities and wording that best fit the entire group, adding those post-its to the wall. After the gathering, type up the group covenant and have it available to refer to for the remaining sessions to help the group remain accountable to one another.

Some groups may need a few examples to get started. Statements might include

- Everyone's story is heard and respected.
- Things shared in confidence are held in confidence.
- People take responsibility for their own learning and growth.
- It's okay to disagree.
- It's not okay to shame, blame, or attack.
- Hurtful or offensive remarks and behaviors do not go unaddressed.
- People can practice speaking the truth in love.
- People can practice trying on new ideas.

Alternative Approach

Instead of breaking out into small groups and then regathering, you as the facilitator can help create a group covenant by naming things that would enable participants to bring their whole selves to the conversations. You can list a few guidelines in advance and then ask the group members to add others during this time together. Among the guidelines you might list are

- Listen carefully before responding and when you do respond begin by paraphrasing what you heard the other person say to ensure you correctly understand them.
- Speak from your own experience.
- As you share insights gained from the group, respect confidentiality.
- Honor your own discomfort at things that are being said or done by members of the group, so that expressions of racism (and other "isms") do not go unaddressed.
- Pay attention to times when you are responding (verbally or nonverbally) with defensiveness and denial, and be open to exploring what lies beneath those responses.
- Share the time and space with others.
- Allow each other and ourselves to change.

As the group comes up with additional guidelines, have someone in the group write them down on a piece of paper that already includes the guidelines you have listed. After the gathering, type up the group covenant and have it available to refer to for the remaining sessions to help the group remain accountable to one another.

Be sure that your covenant addresses how the group will handle conflict.

Consider this...

"In the specificity of our stories we find the most common ground."

-Trevor Noah

Focusing through Story

At the beginning of each gathering, there is time for one person to share one part of their autobiography, told through the lens of race. This is a practice that is modeled in part one of the curriculum and is meant to help students examine their own lives and the way race has manifested and impacted their lives. Telling their stories helps participants learn how to talk about race and the impact race has on their lives in truthful, open ways.

The effect of telling their stories is the creation of relationships among participants and a greater willingness to converse. This practice also conveys to participants that moments of vulnerability in dialogue, though they feel personally risky, are welcomed and valued. Participants are more likely to stay present in the conversations to follow if they feel connected to one another.

For this gathering, the facilitator will model telling a small portion of their personal autobiography. Later in the gathering participants will be asked to begin writing their own autobiographies, so this is a chance to model the process. Remember that this also sets the tone for your time together.

Be open.
Model appropriate vulnerability.
Avoid philosophizing.
Stay focused on your story.
Don't tell a story where you are the hero.

As you speak, be attentive to time, keeping it to 3-5 minutes.

Where to start?

Tell a story of a time when you blundered interacting with someone of different race from your own.

What mistake or misstep did you make? How did you react? After you reflected on the experience, what did you come to understand about yourself, your history, and your privilege?

encounter

Hand out journals to the participants. Let them know that there will be a time for journaling at the end of each time together. The journals are also a place where they can take notes as they might like to do during the next activity.

Explain that in her talk, Dr. Robin Di Angelo lays out the basic foundation for understanding what white privilege is and how it functions in our society. Encourage participants to take notes as they'd like, particularly around definitions and explanations of white privilege, implicit bias, and racism.

Watch an excerpt from Dr. Robin Di Angelo as she explains what white privilege means. A link to this can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Or watch the two videos that define racism and white privilege from Decoded. A link to this can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

engage

Unpack

- Explore the dock image. What did participants find convicting about what she was critiquing?
- Most people can identify explicit racism, but there is everyday racism embedded in our daily lives that often goes unexamined. Ask participants to identify ways everyday racism evidences itself in their lives.
- What is white privilege? Explore Dr. Di Angelo's definition as well as how participants may describe it.
- She gives examples of what to say and what not to say when talking about race. What did you note? What did you find convicting or helpful? How are you now reflecting on things you know you've said?

reflect

Regrouping

After discussing the video, give your group a few minutes to get up and walk around. Tell them how long they'll have for a break. Afterwards, gather them back together and prepare them for a bit of time for personal reflection.

Journaling

Refer to the journals you distributed earlier and let participants know that the remainder of the gathering is a time for them to gather their thoughts, record insights, or scribble questions to reflect on later. Encourage participants to use their journals as a space to record questions and insights as they read during the week.

Ask participants to spend a few minutes journaling about the following:

- How did you first come to learn about and recognize the differences between people of different races?
- Who taught you what characteristics were ascribed to your race and the races of others around you?
- How does what you learned then impact your ability to talk about race now?

For Next Gathering...

At the beginning of each subsequent gathering, there is time for one person to share the portion of their autobiography they've written over the course of the preceding week.

Ask this person ahead of time so that they are prepared to share.

It may be appropriate to coach them on how to tell their story so that it is succinct and focused, thereby setting the tone for the gathering by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

Closing

Close time together by having each participant share one lingering question they have from today that they will keep reflecting on, and one thing they are grateful for from their time together.

Sending

Give participants the handout outlining how to prepare for the next gathering. The handout includes the reading assignment, some guiding reflection questions, as well as a prompt for writing a portion of their spiritual story through the lens of race. Participants will write a more full account of their autobiography told through the lens of race during gathering five, but this weekly writing will help them begin practicing that exercise of telling their stories.

WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk
Participant Preparation
FOR SECOND GATHERING

Readings
Before the next gathering, please read part two of the curriculum. We will read part one at a later time. As you read, you will notice there are reflection questions and discussion topics in the text. You are welcome to review these and journal responses to all of these, but please note that you are not required to do so. Our work in gathering two will focus on particular questions and topics. Please read on for more details.

Whiteness as the Norm: Five Loci of Insights on the Binary of Light/Dark and Black/White

- Chapter 1: Whiteness as the Norm: Reflections on How This is Evidenced and Experienced in America
- Chapter 2: Binary: Lightness and Darkness
- Chapter 3: Iconography: The Investment of Whiteness in Narrating History
- Chapter 4: The White Jesus
- Chapter 5: Lightness and Darkness as Experienced in the Genealogy and Liturgy of the Church

Reflecting on Readings
After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on the following questions. You may choose to reflect in silent thought, process through dialogue with someone else, or use your journal as a way of recording your thoughts.

- What's a working definition of white privilege?
- What's your reaction to the graphic to the lower right?
- Revisit Traci Blackmon's statements and gauge your gut reaction as you read them.
    - If you grew up with an expectation that images on TV, in books, and at movie theaters would share your racial identity, you have white privilege.
    - If you have NEVER felt the burden of "representing your race," you have white privilege.
    - If you have NEVER been presumed as intellectually inferior or incapable solely because of the color of your skin, you have white privilege.
    - If you can presume that history courses offered in your school will provide a narrative about people who look like you, you have white privilege.
    - If this country has NEVER debated the monetary value of all the people who look like you, you have white privilege.
    - If there have NEVER been laws passed to prevent your full participation in democracy, you have white privilege.
    - If you have NEVER been categorized based solely on the color of your skin, you have white privilege.
- If you are white, how is white privilege evidenced in your lived experience? If you are a person of color, how has white privilege impacted your lived experience?

Participant Preparation

FOR SECOND GATHERING

Journaling Your Story

In between gatherings, you are asked to spend time reflecting and recording stories from your own autobiography, paying particular attention to the way race has impacted your life's story.

Write the story of the first time you learned about your race. What did you experience? How did you feel?

Write a second story, of a time later in your life, when you were taught about values or descriptions attached to your race. Who was there? Were you taught in words or actions; directly or indirectly? What values or descriptions were attached your own racial identity? What values or descriptions were you taught about people of a different race? Was white seen as the norm to which others were compared?

Note: These weekly writings are in preparation for the activity in gathering five. At that time, you will be combining what you've written each week and adding to the stories to form a more complete autobiography.

Engage and Explore

Engage the reflection questions and discussion topics at the conclusion of part two, chapter one, and do the suggested activities:

> Over the next week, try and take notice of whiteness around you. Where and when do you see whiteness? If you are white, try to say to yourself, even in some of the more routine aspects of your life, "This happened to me because I am white." Be open to discussing insights about what you noticed or experienced as you go through this exercise. For example, if in church ask yourself "Is that a hymn sung only in white churches?"; when in grocery stores ask yourself "Are these food products here because they meet the needs of white people?"; when walking down the street watch how people react to you and ask yourself "Would that have gone differently if I were not white?" Play with these questions, and look for opportunities to recognize how whiteness establishes itself every day in very routine ways as the norm. Note that many of the suggestions listed here assume that you are a white person learning about white privilege. If you are person of color, take note of where whiteness impacts and manifests in the routine aspects of your life. Whatever your racial identity, consider discussing insights about what you noticed or experienced as you go through this exercise with a friend or with the group when you reconvene.

Expanding this exercise (optional, but worthwhile). Venture into the children's toy store nearest your home. What are the race of the dolls and figurines you find? Go in search of a band-aid that would be disguisable on brown or black skin as "flesh" colored or as "clear" band-aids are on white skin. Check out the selection of hair care products and the intended customers. What do you observe? Where are the products located? Is there a difference in the quantity of products available?

second gathering

WHITENESS AS THE NORM: FIVE LOCI OF INSIGHTS ON THE BINARY OF LIGHT/DARK AND BLACK/WHITE

prepare

What's behind all this?

In this gathering participants explore how whiteness functions as the normative experience to which other experiences are compared, and how that impacts white people and people of color. The reflections by the authors cover a vast amount of information and stories, but all are grounded in the discussion of how whiteness has become the norm in American culture, the advantages that presents to white people, and how whiteness as norm is evidenced and experienced in America. From there, the authors go on to explore how whiteness as norm has led to binary language of light/dark and how that permeates our culture, icons, artwork, the lens through which history is told, and even places of worship, liturgy, scripture, and songs.

These chapters intend to help participants identify how whiteness has created a norm and how that presumption of white as "norm" is detrimental. It also asks participants to critically imagine what changes could be made in their spheres of influence to begin or to continue to erode away the investment in protecting and elevating whiteness.

Participants' Perspectives

For some white participants, this may be the first time they have considered how being white impacts their day-to-day life. The experience of walking through their town and realizing how whiteness is presumed to be the norm may come as a shock. Facilitators should be attentive to approaching these conversations in truth and love as people come to a new awareness.

For other participants, this material will come as no surprise; they will be ready to share experiences and critically engage in the conversation about how it has come to be. They may also rush the conversation to "fixing".

Facilitators should be attentive to balancing the group dynamics so that those who are coming to awareness have time to process this new information and folks who have been thinking about these topics longer are still challenged. Facilitators should also be attentive so as not to rush prematurely towards actionable solutions. The rush towards practical solutions may be an attempt to distance from actually deeply engaging in this material.

Materials needed for this gathering

- Copy of group covenant
- Journals and pens
- Equipment to stream or play video from the internet

Optional materials if doing activity six

- Hymnals
- Liturgy and/or bulletins
- Communion supplies

Where is this going?

Participants will learn how whiteness has become equated with the "norm" and how whiteness as norm has created social and cultural systems that celebrate, protect, and advantage white people while criticizing, wounding, and disadvantaging people of color. Participants will look critically at their lives and surroundings to see how whiteness as norm manifests itself.

Consider this...

"In this country American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate."

Toni Morrison

welcome

Gathering

Continue to help participants by giving them opportunity to learn one another's names and a bit more about one another. Allowing participants an opportunity to share about themselves in more casual ways at the beginning helps participants feel more comfortable speaking later.

Invite participants to share their name and, in two or three sentences, their favorite seasonal activity this time of year.

Keep this sharing to a sentence or two.

Centering Practice

Choose a centering practice from Spiritual Practices Resource at the back of the facilitator guide. These centering practices are an opportunity to help participants transition from the busyness of their lives into this space and time together and to be in the moment.

The Focus

Let the participants know the focus for time together. In today's gathering, the groundwork needed for fruitful dialogue continues to be laid. Participants will engage in examining and reflecting on how whiteness is presumed to be the norm in American culture and the consequences of the presumption.

Expanding on the authors' reflections, participants will have opportunities to examine their own experiences in order to come to greater understanding about their own actions, language, and presumptions

Focusing through Story

This time is set aside for one person to a share one part of their autobiography, told through the lens of race. Facilitators should have invited this person to share prior to this gathering to ensure that their story will set the tone for your time together by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

The prompt: Summarize the second story you wrote when following the directions for "Journaling Your Story" in the "Participant Preparation for Gathering Two" handout. As you tell the story about when you were taught about you race, be sure to answer these questions: What values or descriptions were attached to your racial identity? Was white the norm to which other races were compared and, if so, how did that affect you?

Sharing story...

When helping participants tell their stories, encourage them to be open, avoid philosophizing, and stay focused on a specific story.

Encourage them to tell a story where they weren't the hero. Help them be attentive to time, keeping their sharing to 3-5 minutes.

Looking ahead...

This is a practice that is modeled in part one of the curriculum and is meant to help students examine their own lives and the way race and privilege has manifested and impacted their lives. Telling their stories helps participants learn how to talk about race and the impact race has on their lives in truthful, open ways. The group will read part one of the curriculum and complete writing their autobiographies for gathering five.

encounter

Watch the short video on everyday racism and what people should do. A link to this can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Revisit the group covenant created during the first gathering as you proceed into engaging the discussions and activities for this gathering.

Unpack the video in discussion:

- Everyday racism, as the host defines it, is the normalized experiences people of color encounter daily based on difference from the white norm.
- What examples does he give?
- What's the impact of "white is right" mentality?
- There's a system that sells the "white is right" message. How have participants bought in?
- Why is it necessary to talk about race?

Media options...

If showing a video is not possible, play the audio for people to listen to.

engage

Listed below are several different activities to help the group engage the readings more fully. More activity suggestions are listed here than will be feasible for one learning gathering.

Facilitators should carefully select one (or more) activities that will engage their group's learning style and growing edges the most, and focus on those.

Activity 1: Debrief the Week: Seeing Everyday Privilege and Walking the Neighborhood

(Focus on part two, chapter one, in the curriculum.)
In between gatherings, participants were asked to notice whiteness, its impact and manifestations, around them. The intention of this exercise was to raise awareness of how race and privilege affect their lives, perhaps without them ever really taking note of it before. By critically looking at their everyday experiences, participants hopefully come to see the ways whiteness is the norm and the detrimental consequences of this norm.

- Begin conversation about the idea that white is equated with "norm" in American culture by discussing John Dorhauer's reflection. He identifies how whiteness is equated with the "norm" and how white privilege manifests in his everyday life. Where does he identify it? Ask participants if and how their experiences are similar? How are their experiences different?
- Traci Blackmon provides concrete examples of what white privilege looks like. Read through her reflection as a group pausing for discussion along the way about if and how participants have experienced the privileges she names.
- Review what participants observed in their networks and by walking around their neighborhood grocery, toy store, and other places of business. [sidebar: Modify this exercise. Facilitators can take pictures when they do their neighborhood walk. Show participants pictures to demonstrate different ways whiteness is presumed to be the norm.
- Help participants reflect on their experience further. Stephen Ray brings up that when white is the norm, there are presumptions about who belongs in certain space and that these presumptions can actually create dangerous space for persons who are not white. Ask participants about where in the community presumptions about welcome creates safe space and dangerous space. What role does race play?
- Da Vita McCallister identifies the role that media played in her life in demonstrating white was the "norm" and that her presence could, and often would, be viewed as problematic. Ask participants about the media they consume. How are people of different races depicted? Are the images of one or more racial groups protected and exalted above others? Ask participants to explore how and if, using examples from their own experience, media reinforces whiteness as norm.
- Dorhauer says, "Whiteness is a part of the air I breathe." What does he mean? How does this statement resonate with participants or not?

Activity 2: Investigation via Word Association: Light and Dark

(Focus on part two, chapter two, in the curriculum.)
Note that some participants may have already engaged in the first part of this exercise as they were reading/journaling. If they did, encourage them to review the lists they created and ask them to join in starting with the step "Have participants go back over their lists and put a star by those words that include an implicit judgment."

John Paddock also reflects on how white privilege manifests in his everyday life. Facilitators may use similar questions to reflect on his writing or to augment conversation.

Modify this exercise

Facilitators can take pictures when they do their neighborhood walk. Show participants pictures to demonstrate different ways whiteness is presumed to be the norm.

Media options...

Find the scene from *Happy Days* referenced in DaVita McCallister's reflection and show it during the conversation.

- Pass out a piece of paper to each participant. Have participants draw a line down the middle. Give participants 45 seconds to write down any words they associate with "dark" on one half of the paper. Stop them after time is up and have them shift to writing on the other half of the paper. Give participants 45 seconds to write down any words they associate with "light" on one half of the paper. Have participants go back over their lists and put a star by those words that include an implicit judgment (good/bad etc.).
- Afterward discuss with participants:
    - What trends do you see?
    - Are any of the terms associated with "Light" also associated with Whiteness and are any of the terms associated with "Dark" also associated with Blackness?
    - Are there words that you didn't write down? Why didn't you write them?
    - How do you see the language of light/dark binaries playing out in your own life? How might your language of light and dark impact others?
- Put this activity in conversation with the authors.
    - Look at John Dorhauer's and John Paddock's examples of how language is used to create metaphors of light/dark. Compare and contrast their lists with those the participants came up with.
    - Stephen Ray highlights some of the evolution of the light/dark binary and the depiction of light as a metaphor safety, beauty, and clean and dark as a metaphor for danger, death, and dirt. What remains unclear, he says, is how these descriptors, became assigned to people, but what is clear is that "unearned disadvantage and lack of access increase the closer a person or community moves to the dark end of the spectrum. It is important to recall that, for the most part, neither this privilege nor this disadvantage is earned. Both are consequences of the cultural interpretation of human bodies." How do the metaphors of light/dark reinforce cultural interpretation of human bodies? What alternative metaphors could be used?
    - Da Vita McCallister describes the binary she lived in as light/dark, rather than black/white. For her, how did that binary affect her life? How did she push back against the binary of light and dark? How might participants push back against that binary?

Activity 3: Iconography: *Star Trek* As a Code

(Focus on part two, chapter three, in the curriculum.)
Da Vita McCallister investigates how science fiction can serve as a code for our discussions here. She says that science fiction is able to project our shared values and beliefs onto a common canvas that allows viewers to examine the validity and/or absurdity of long-held traditions and ideas. *Star Trek* is the lens she picks up to help participants see the absurdity and the damage of short-sided biases.
View the clip she speaks of and ask for observations from the group.

Expanding the conversation:

- *Star Trek* was groundbreaking and known for having the most diverse cast to be assembled in mainstream TV in the late 1960s and early '70s. Think about science fiction and other movies: what have they taught you about whiteness and people of color?

Activity 4: The Rest of the Story: History Books

(Focus on part two, chapter three, in the curriculum.)
John Paddock highlights how American history textbooks speak from a limited perspective, often glorifying stories of white heroes and figures and conveniently leaving out details that would depict white people in a negative light. He asserts that we have to start telling the truth about our past.

Choose one or more of the following. Links to each of the videos can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

- Show a short video that looks critically at the history of Columbus specifically. Use this as a teaching tool to begin telling the truth about American history. Discuss with the group other hidden histories as a way of telling truth.
- Show the movie trailer or an excerpt from *Hidden Figures (2016)*. Discuss with the group what they know about this story and other hidden histories as a way of telling truth about history.
- John Dorhauer lifts up the story of John Brown. Teach more about his life and work, and lift up the difference between his life and his life as it is depicted in typical history books. Read the speech Brown wrote at the close of his trial or watch the brief highlights of the speech. Discuss with participants what they notice about the complexity of the process of unlearning the stories instilled by education and upbringing, and learning the more complicated nuances of history.

Media options...

A link to the video excerpt of "Lokai and Bele" can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Activity 5: Images of Whiteness

(Focus on part two, chapter four, in the curriculum.)
If you are meeting in a church, send participants out to investigate the church building and find every painting or picture of Jesus.

When you regroup or as you all move together and find different images discuss

- What race is being depicted? How is it being depicted? What implicit or explicit message is conveyed?
- What impact does the artwork have in the faith formation of the congregation?
- Are the majority of images of Jesus white? What's at stake in depicting Jesus as white? What impact does that have? Put these questions in conversation with the authors' writings in chapter four.
- Put your observations in conversation with Traci Blackmon's story of the black Barbie in her office (in part two, chapter three) and the power of having an image and narrative of beauty for black and brown children in a world that idolizes whiteness as the standard of beauty. Connect this with the story of her daughter questioning the color of Jesus as he was depicted in her school (in part two, chapter four). What's behind these images? At what cost does the preservation and veneration of white depictions of Jesus come in each participant's own context? Does the artwork in that space need to tell a different story than it currently does?

Activity 6: Lightness and Darkness: Hymns, Liturgy, and Communion

(Focus on part two, chapter five, in the curriculum.)
If you're meeting in the context of a spiritual community that sings hymns or songs, uses liturgy, and/or serves communion, invite participants to think critically about the images of light and dark that they experience in their worship or spiritual life together.

Hand out hymnals or songbooks and have participants look through some of the familiar hymns. Be prepared to direct them to a few hymns you have pre-selected. Discuss with them what images of light and dark are used in the hymns or songs. What are the implications of these images?

Or

Review liturgies or bulletins from recent services. What language in them presumes the binary of light and dark? Are there words that teach light/white as something to be embraced and darkness/black as something to be avoided? Look particularly at the liturgy, scripture, and songs used in Advent and for the Transfiguration.

Or (continued on next page)

Modification...

If you are meeting in a home or other community space, you could modify this exercise to examine the kinds of artwork, photographs, and the figures depicted there, asking the same questions of what you find.

Bring the communion elements typically used in the church or spiritual community. What color is the bread? What color is the wine or juice? How does this reflect the act of remembering Jesus and his embodiment? If the congregation uses white bread, why is this so? If the congregation uses darker bread, why is this so? Put the group's reflections in conversation with Da Vita McCallister's reflection.

- How difficult would it be to imagine a middle-eastern body broken in order to save a whitened-world?
- How would it change the way we view brown and black bodies if dark bread was consumed in our worship?
- What would the word "remembrance" mean if the symbol of the body of Christ gathered around the table began with a brown body and added white bodies to it?
- What if *World Communion* day was the only day to witness a White Christ in the loaf, how would that shift the thinking in your church?

Consider serving communion as a part of your time together using dark bread as the focus symbol in the communion meal.

reflect

Regrouping

After the engagement activities, give your group a few minutes to get up and walk around. Tell them how long they'll have for a break. Afterwards, gather them back together and prepare them for a bit of time for personal reflection.

Journaling

Ask participants to spend a few minutes journaling about the following:
Tell a story of a time recently (maybe even today) when you were aware that being white was equated with or presumed to be the norm? How did that experience reflect the presence of white privilege? What impact did it have on you?

Closing

Close time together by having each participant share one lingering question they have from today that they will keep reflecting on and one thing they are grateful for from their time together.

Sending

Give participants the handout outlining how to prepare for the next gathering. The handout includes the reading assignment, some guiding reflection questions, as well as a prompt for writing a portion of their spiritual story through the lens of race. Participants will write a more full account of their autobiography told through the lens of race during the fifth gathering, but this weekly writing will help them begin practicing that exercise of telling their stories.

For Next Gathering...

During the sending is a good time to ask for one person to share a part of their story at the next gathering. It's important to ask this person ahead of time so that they are prepared to share.

The prompt is located in the next gathering's facilitator guide and will be based on one of the journaling assignments on their handout.

It may be appropriate to coach them on how to tell their story so that it is succinct and focused, thereby setting the tone for the gathering by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk
Participant Preparation
FOR THIRD GATHERING

Readings
Before the next gathering, please read the first three chapters of part three of the curriculum. As you read, you will notice there are reflection questions and discussion topics in the text. You are welcome to review these and journal responses to all of these, but please note that you are not required to do so. Our work in gathering three will focus on particular questions and topics. Please read on for more details.

The Cash Value of Whiteness or Whiteness as a Tax-Exempt Status

- Chapter 1: Whiteness as a Tax-Exempt Status
- Chapter 2: How Education Advantages Whites
- Chapter 3: How Housing Practices Advantage Whites

Reflecting on Readings
After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on these questions. You may choose to reflect in silent thought, process through dialogue with someone else, or use your journal as a way of recording your thoughts.

- What does it mean to say that whiteness has cash value? What does it mean to say that whiteness is a tax exempt status?
- Education is an economic tool. How does or doesn't your own education translate into economic power? How would a different quality of education have affected your life?
- How is your education a product of where you lived and the neighborhood you grew up in? If you had grown up in a different neighborhood, where houses were much less expensive or much more expensive, how do you imagine your experience in the classroom and in the general public sphere would have been different?

Journaling Your Story
In between sessions, you are asked to spend time reflecting and recording stories from your own autobiography, paying particular attention to the way race has impacted your life's story.

Write a story about an experience you had growing up in the neighborhood or school growing up with attention to how race influenced your experience. What race are the majority of the people in your stories during your early childhood, elementary school, middle/junior high school, and high school years? Were their presumptions made about white people'ss or people of color's ability in the classroom? Was there segregation, either by force or by situation, in your classrooms or neighborhoods? What impact did that have on you?

Note: These weekly writings are in preparation for the activity in gathering five. At that time, you will be combining what you've written each week and adding to the stories to form a more complete autobiography.

Engage and Explore
The readings reference and provide links to several different academic and sociological studies. Choose one or more of these studies to read thoroughly.

third gathering

THE CASH VALUE OF WHITENESS OR WHITENESSS AS A TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

prepare

What's behind all this?

In this gathering participants explore how economic systems, educational systems, and housing practices in the United States are set up in ways that generally advantage white people and disadvantage people of color. This gathering is the first of two gatherings looking specifically at the institutionalization and perpetuation of white privilege.

Remember this curriculum is an effort to enable people to "see with new eyes" how privilege works. Its goal is to illuminate how white people in America, in a myriad of ways, receive privileged consideration simply because they are white. By seeing privilege and exposing how it works, the hope is that participants, and the communities of which they are a part, will have more sophisticated understanding and more impactful commitments to reducing the impact of white privilege.

Participants' Perspectives

For some white participants, this will be the first time they are hearing that there are certain advantages awarded to them because of the color of their skin. Reactions will vary. Some may be defensive saying that they did not ask for the privileges. Some may say that they don't want the privileges. It will be helpful to remind participants that white privilege is not something that white people ask for or enjoy on purpose, nor does having white privilege make them a bad person. There is no reason to feel ashamed. Rather, this is an opportunity to see the realities that are unfolding around us everyday and to expose them for what they are so that it's clear what systems need to be addressed. Discussing white privilege is for the purpose of exposing the systems and institutions that have created advantages and disadvantages, not to demonize anyone.

Some participants may work hard to deny that advantages exist for white people, debate the trustworthiness of the studies, or try to explain the data through a lens other than race. These are distancing behaviors, meaning that the participant is trying to distance themselves from the topic because it is hard to deal with or makes them uncomfortable. Their tone of voice might sound like indignation or anger, but what they might actually be feeling is much different. Wonder aloud about why they are questioning the data. Ask them to suspend suspicion for a time

Materials needed for this gathering

- Copy of group covenant
- Journals
- Equipment to stream or play video from the internet

Where is this going?

Participants will investigate how financial, educational, and housing systems in the United States work for the economic benefit of white people relative to people of color generally and Black people more specifically.

Consider this...

"The legal battle against segregation is won, but the community battle goes on."

-Dorothy Day

and see what might be learned. Or, you may find it helpful to back up to some of the last gathering's questions about how privilege presents itself. Ask if they can find a band-aid that generally matches their skin tone; if when they stay in a hotel, the complimentary shampoo generally works with their hair texture; and if when they buy "nude" color pantyhose at the store it generally appears nude on their legs. These are seemingly benign perks that white people have come to expect, which reflects the hold that white privilege has on the psyche. Now, imagine the shampoo in the hotel was Pink Oil Lotion meant for a person of color's hair. If you are white, and you forgot your shampoo, what would your reaction be? It is difficult to see advantages until they don't advantage you.

welcome

Gathering

Continue to help participants by giving them opportunity to learn one another's names and a bit more about one another. Allowing participants an opportunity to share about themselves in more casual ways at the beginning helps participants feel more comfortable speaking later.

Keep this sharing to a sentence or two.

Invite participants to share their name and to describe their present emotional state as if giving a weather report. Invite them to add a sentence or two about why they are giving this report if they would like. An example response would be, "'Foggy but sunshine expected later in the day,' because the day was a bit confusing but I expect time with the group tonight to be enlightening."

Centering Practice

Choose a centering practice from Spiritual Practices Resource at the back of the facilitator guide. These centering practices are an opportunity to help participants transition from the busyness of their lives into this space and time together and to be in the moment.

The Focus

Let the participants know the focus for time together and remind them of the group covenant. In today's gathering, participants will explore research, studies, and stories that illuminate how the financial, educational, and housing systems in the United States work, who they advantage, and the far-reaching impact these systems have.

Focusing through Story

This time is set aside for one person to a share one part of their autobiography, told through the lens of race. Facilitators should have invited this person to share prior to this gathering to ensure that their story will set the tone for your time together by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

The prompt: Summarize the story you wrote when following the directions for "Journaling Your Story" in the "Participant Preparation for Gathering Three" handout. Tell a story about an experience you had in your neighborhood or school growing up with attention to how race influenced your experience. Consider how your story reflects the data and studies in this gathering's readings.

encounter

Watch the video that visually depicts the experiential side of the statistics and studies from the readings. A link to this video can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Revisit the group covenant created during the first gathering as you proceed into engaging the discussions and activities for this gathering.

Unpack the video in discussion:

- Citing several different studies, the video depicts different ways that white people (or people presumed to be white) experience advantages. Similar studies and conclusions were cited in the readings for this gathering. Ask the participants what they noticed and what they felt as they watched the video. What surprised them? What image sticks in their minds?
- The video concludes asking if this isn't racism what is? Help participants think about their answer to that final question by asking them for their working definition of racism. Where does white privilege, prejudice, and power fit into the definition of racism?

engage

Listed below are several different activities to help the group engage the readings more fully. More activity suggestions are listed here than will be feasible for one learning gathering. Facilitators should carefully select one (or more) activities that will engage their group's learning style and growing edges the most, and focus on those.

Sharing story...

When helping participants tell their stories, encourage them to be open, avoid philosophizing, and stay focused on a specific story.

Encourage them to tell a story where they weren't the hero. Help them be attentive to time, keeping their sharing to 3-5 minutes.

Looking ahead...

This is a practice that is modeled in part one of the curriculum and is meant to help students examine their own lives and the way race and privilege has manifested and impacted their lives. Telling their stories helps participants learn how to talk about race and the impact race has on their lives in truthful, open ways. The group will read part one of the curriculum and complete writing their autobiographies for gathering five.

Activity 1: Taxes and Tax Exemption

(Focus on part three, chapter one, in the curriculum.)
Begin conversation by asking about Steven Ray's definition of the Black Tax. What does he mean by that? After establishing a working definition and understanding among the group, have participants divide up into small groups of three or four. Ask them to look through Steven Ray's reflection and make a list of different services and amenities he names that are affected by the Black Tax. That is, list the different services and amenities that black communities invest in at equal rates to their white peers but receive less value.

Give participants 10-12 minutes to read carefully through the article again and make their list. When the groups come back together, explore the items on the list more deeply. What does the number of services on the list indicate?

In review, ask participants if Steven Ray's focus on the Black Tax, a tax from which whites are exempt, could be used in dialogue about economics and race to re-center the conversation to rightly acknowledge black people are paying taxes but not benefitting from them in the same proportion as whites?

Activity 2: Exploration of Education

(Focus on part three, chapter two, in the curriculum.)
Exploring the idea that whiteness has a cash value, John Dorhauer focuses his reflection on the American educational system. He articulates that education is a principal driver of economic outcomes and benefits, and given that studies show that race plays a significant role in determining what educational opportunities are available to people, Dorhauer connects conclusions from multiple studies to show how skin color impacts education quality and access, disciplinary protocols, dropout rates, and college enrollment. Discuss with participants what information or studies drew their attention and why. What information surprised them?

Help participants integrate the pieces of this complex puzzle of race, education, access to resources, and lasting economic impact by listening to a TED talk by Kandice Sumner. Telling both stories of her children and her work now as a teacher, she names the disparity in education and asks the question of why a good education is exclusive to some and not available to all.

A link to her TED talk can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Activity 3: Exploration of Housing Practices

(Focus on part three, chapter three, in the curriculum.)
A variety of historical factors and conditions in housing practices have explicitly disadvantaged people of color. Help participants unpack the reading.

- Ask participants to name and explain different historical events that impacted housing for people of color. The practice of red-lined real estate covenants is within recent memory. Ask participants if they were aware of practices like this in their neighborhoods growing up. What are some of the long-term implications of these historical practices?
- John Dorhauer writes about the "10% rule." What is it? Have participants seen evidence of this phenomenon or related phenomenon like white flight? In talking about the "10% rule" he asks about the decisions that families make when investing in a home or deciding where to sell. Ask participants about the decisions they have made when determining where to live. What factors went into their decision? Did they consider racial demographics? Did they or would they invest in a racially diverse neighbor hood if they knew at a certain point the property would lose value? Thinking about now, if they are homeowners, would they stay in the house they are in if racial demographics began changing or move before the property value changed?
- A link to map as well as other census maps can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide. Ask participants what they generally notice when they look at the maps. What do they notice about their specific area? Knowing the area in which they live, ask what general connections they make between different neighborhood's racial makeup, income level, access to businesses and educational opportunities.
- Ask participants what is one new insight they've learned about how white privilege affects housing markets and one new insight they've learned about the significance of housing markets on people's lives.

reflect

Regrouping

After the engagement activities, give your group a few minutes to get up and walk around. Tell them how long they'll have for a break. Afterwards, gather them back together and prepare them for a bit of time for personal reflection.

Journaling

Ask participants to spend a few minutes journaling about the following. Some participants may have journaled on this topic this while reading for this gathering. Invite them to revisit their writing in light of this gathering's conversation and add to their reflections:

Often in conversations about white privilege, and in particular in conversations about the communities in which one lives, one will hear it said: "But we don't have any (or many) people of color in our community/neighborhood/town." If that is true of your town, neighborhood, or church, take some time to write about what conditions and circumstances contribute to that being the case. How does it feel for you to live in an all white community or worship in an all white church?

If it is not true of your town, neighborhood, or church, what conditions and circumstances contribute to their diversity? How does it feel for you to live in a racially diverse community or worship in a racially diverse church?

Closing

Close time together by having each participant share one lingering question they have from today that they will keep reflecting on and one thing they are grateful for from their time together.

Sending

Give participants the handout outlining how to prepare for the next gathering. The handout includes the reading assignment, some guiding reflection questions, as well as a prompt for writing a portion of their spiritual story through the lens of race. Participants will write a more full account of their autobiography told through the lens of race during the fifth gathering, but this weekly writing will help them begin practicing that exercise of telling their stories.

For Next Gathering...

During the sending is a good time to ask for one person to share a part of their story at the next gathering. It's important to ask this person ahead of time so that they are prepared to share.

The prompt is located in the next gathering's facilitator guide and will be based on one of the journaling assignments on their handout.

It may be appropriate to coach them on how to tell their story so that it is succinct and focused, thereby setting the tone for the gathering by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

Participant Preparation

FOR FOURTH GATHERING

Readings

Before the next gathering, please read the final two chapters of part three of the curriculum. As you read, you will notice there are reflection questions and discussion topics in the text. You are welcome to review these and journal responses to all of these, but please note that you are not required to do so. Our work in gathering four will focus on particular questions and topics. Please read on for more details.

The Cash Value of Whiteness or Whiteness as a Tax-Exempt Status

- Chapter 4: How Income and Wealth Disparities Advantage Whites
- Chapter 5: How the Medical and Health Industries Advantage Whites

Reflecting on Readings

After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on these questions. You may choose to reflect in silent thought, process through dialogue with someone else, or use your journal as a way of recording your thoughts.

- Where and how has the cash value of whiteness affected your life and your family?
- How do you identify its effect on your education, employment, compensation and benefits, mortgage and credit, family wealth and inheritance, social networking and business connections, and/or health care?

Journaling Your Story

In between sessions, you are asked to spend time reflecting and recording stories from your own autobiography, paying particular attention to the way race has impacted your life's story.

Write a story about a time you became aware of the income level of your family and the impact it had on your life and opportunities. Looking back, what influence did your race play on your income or economic mobility? How do you imagine your experience would be different had you been a different race at that same income or economic level?

Note: These weekly writings are in preparation for the activity in gathering five. At that time, you will be combining what you've written each week and adding to the stories to form a more complete autobiography.

Engage and Explore

The readings reference and provide links to several different academic and sociological studies. Choose one or more of these studies to read thoroughly.

WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk

fourth gathering

THE CASH VALUE OF WHITENESS OR WHITENESSS AS A TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

prepare

What's behind all this?

In this gathering participants explore how income potential, generational wealth, and health care in the United States were historically set up in ways to generally advantage white people and disadvantage people of color. They will look at the impact this history has today. This gathering is the second of two gatherings looking specifically at the institutionalization and perpetuation of white privilege.

Remember this curriculum is an effort to enable people to "see with new eyes" how privilege works. Its goal is to illuminate how white people in America, in a myriad of ways, receive privileged consideration simply because they are white. By seeing privilege and exposing how it works, the hope is that participants, and the communities of which they are a part, will have more sophisticated understanding and more impactful commitments to reducing the impact of white privilege.

Participants' Perspectives

Similar to last gathering, for some white participants, this will be among the first exposure to certain advantages awarded to them because of the color of their skin. Their reactions will vary. Some may be defensive and say that they did not ask for the privileges. Some may say that they don't want the privileges. It will be helpful to remind participants that white privilege is not something that white people ask for or enjoy on purpose, nor does having white privilege make them a bad person. There is no reason to feel ashamed. Rather, this is an opportunity to see the realities that are unfolding around us everyday and to expose them for what they are so that it's clear what systems need to be addressed. Discussing white privilege is for the purpose of exposing the systems and institutions that have created advantages and disadvantages, not to demonize anyone.

Some participants may work hard to deny that advantages exist for white people, debate the trustworthiness of the studies, or try to explain the data through a lens other than race. See the Participants' Perspectives section in gathering three for possibilities for further conversation.

Materials needed for this gathering

- A copy of the group covenant
- Journals and pens
- Equipment to stream or play video from the internet

Optional Materials

- If doing Activity 1:
  - Multiple copies of the game Monopoly
  - A copy of the original rules
  - Copies of the remixed rules

Where is this going?

Participants will investigate how income and wealth disparities as well as healthcare systems in the United States work for the economic benefit of white people relative to people of color generally and Black people more specifically.

Consider this...

"Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."

-Paulo Freire

welcome

Gathering

Continue to help participants by giving them opportunity to learn one another's names and a bit more about one another. Allowing participants an opportunity to share about themselves in more casual ways at the beginning helps participants feel more comfortable speaking later.

Keep this sharing to two or three sentences.

Invite participants to share their name, and, in two or three sentences, their most unique pastime or hobby.

Centering Practice

Choose a centering practice from Spiritual Practices Resource at the back of the facilitator guide. These centering practices are an opportunity to help participants transition from the busyness of their lives into this space and time together and to be in the moment.

The Focus

Let the participants know the focus for time together. In today's gathering, participants will explore the idea that whiteness has a cash value in the United States, how that came to be, and who stands to benefit from it. Participants will also continue from the last gathering to explore how the cash value of whiteness translates to access to resources, like housing, financial security, and health care.

Focusing through Story

This time is set aside for one person to a share one part of their autobiography, told through the lens of race. Facilitators should have invited this person to share prior to this gathering to ensure that their story will set the tone for your time together by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

The prompt: Summarize the story you wrote when following the directions for "Journaling Your Story" in the "Participant Preparation for Gathering Four" handout. Reflect on a time you were aware of the income level of your family and the impact it had on your life and opportunities. Looking back, how did your race impact your economic opportunity?

Sharing story...

When helping participants tell their stories, encourage them to be open, avoid philosophizing, and stay focused on a specific story.

Encourage them to tell a story where they weren't the hero. Help them be attentive to time, keeping their sharing to 3-5 minutes.

Looking ahead...

This is a practice that is modeled in part one of the curriculum and is meant to help students examine their own lives and the way race and privilege has manifested and impacted their lives. Telling their stories helps participants learn how to talk about race and the impact race has on their lives in truthful, open ways. The group will read part one of the curriculum and complete writing their autobiographies for gathering five.

encounter

Watch an excerpt from speaker Tim Wise speaking about denial and white privilege. A link to this can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Revisit the group covenant created during the first gathering as you proceed into engaging the discussions and activities for this gathering.

Unpack the video in discussion:
Tim Wise, talking about a survey of American households, summarizes the findings. Only six percent of the white people surveyed said racism was still a significant problem in the United States. In another study, twelve percent of white people surveyed said they thought Elvis Presley might be still alive. This means, roughly speaking, white Americans are twice as likely to believe that Elvis Presley is alive than they are to believe what people of color are saying about their experiences of discrimination. He says he believes that this is not because people are meanspirited or hardhearted, so what is going on? Why are so many white people in denial?

He points out that the language used about privilege is integral to the work of addressing racism. Why does talking about privilege advantage matter?

Resource

A link to the full lecture can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

The portion of his talk that is referenced here begins at 13:30 minutes.

engage

Listed below are different activities to help the group engage the readings more fully. More activity suggestions are listed here than will be feasible for one learning gathering. Facilitators should carefully select one (or more) activities that will engage their group's learning style and growing edges the most, and focus on those.

Activity 1: Monopoly Remixed

(Focus on part three, chapter four, in the curriculum.)
Over a century and a half after the formal end to the legal institution of slavery and decades after the end of legalized segregation, the impact of inequality continues to affect people of color, particularly in the black community. While individuals may have great financial, educational, or social success, in general and statistically speaking, black people make less money on average than white counterparts in similar positions. Blacks are overrepresented in prisons and underrepresented in college. This reality raises the question: how did this happen? As John Paddock says in his reflection, this disparity in income and wealth has resulted from black people's historically being shut out of paths to wealth, including access to mortgages, fair interest rates, jobs in civil service, and educational opportunities like the GI bill.

In a culture that promotes the idea people can get ahead if they just try hard enough, white people cling to that narrative rather than explore how policies have advantaged some and disadvantaged others. The truth is it is not enough that people work hard. Income and wealth disparities are a product of historical events and continue to impact people today.

This exercise is intended to help participants extrapolate how long-term economic effects of race-based policies advantage some over others through a remixed version of the game Monopoly.

- Determine the number of Monopoly games needed, depending on the size of your group. At each board there should be three teams, with two or three players per team. One person on the team will play the game, with the others on the team acting as advisors.
- Divide participants into teams around the game boards and give them directions on how to set the game up as if for regular play. Each team should choose one of three tokens to represent it: the car, the hat, and the boot.
- Teach participants the official rules of Monopoly, letting them know that this game was created in the early 20th century as a simulation of the business world. For most participants, the rules will be a review, but make sure all the participants are clear about how the game is supposed to work. Let them play for three turns to get the hang of the game.
- Now, have participants reset the game. Tell participants that this time, the rules of play are going to be remixed to more closely reflect a more complex reality. Hand out the remixed rules available as a handout at the end of this lesson. Let play begin. After the teams have played nine turns, ask each of them to total up their wealth, both cash in hand as well as property value.

Suggestion

Facilitators may want to set up games before gathering to optimize time.

- Ask participants to reflect on game play. Discuss how it felt to play the remixed version of the game. Can a good Monopoly player be competitive even with a hard start? In the last two turns, everyone was playing by the same rules—did those turns feel fair? What connections do participants make between the game and what they have read in the authors' reflections for this week?
    - Help participants make the historical connections. Like the boot player pieces, Native Americans could have their property confiscated by white colonizers. Like the hats, most black people were not allowed to own land or property until after the Civil War—even then, Jim Crow laws and discriminatory business practices prevented buying property in many neighborhoods.

Activity 2: Exploration of Impact

(Focus on part three, all chapters, in the curriculum.)
Note that some participants may have already engaged in this exercise as they were reading/journaling. If they did, encourage them to review their writing as group discussion begins.

In a discussion with participants, ask where they identify the cash value of whiteness on their life and family. How has the cash value of whiteness impacted family wealth and inheritance, education, employment, compensation and benefits, mortgage and credit, legal representation, social networking and business connections, healthcare, and government policies and benefits?

Activity 3: Exploration of Housing Practices

(Focus on part three, chapter five, in the curriculum.)
Da Vita McCallister witnesses to the lingering psychological and social impacts of systemic racism on communities of color. Telling the story of the men in her family who steadfastly refused medical care, some of them believing that it would do them more harm than good, she links their current behaviors as connected with the longer history of medical institutions and physicians exploiting black patients for research or inadequately treating people of color for illnesses. Using the work of Dr. Joy DeGruy, she explains that there is invisible trauma that results from fear and sensing how vulnerable you may really be.

Discuss with participants what psychological effects they have experienced, or might imagine experiencing, as a result from knowing they may not receive good healthcare or that adequate care is not accessible. How does that or would that affect their quality of life? How sick would they have to be before it would be worth risking treatment?

Engage in a thought experiment with the group. Get them to assign a numeric value, a cash value, to the psychological effects of being white in the American healthcare system. Ask them how much is it worth to have access to care and physicians they

trust, or who reflect their cultural and ethnic heritage. How much is it worth to not fear discrimination or prejudice in the exam room? How much is it worth to have access to clinical studies or to receive health statistics for health risks associated with their race, rather than studies associated with a different race because there is no comparable study done for their community? Now account for the fact that access to care throughout one's life prevents other problems. What's the overall cash value or economic advantage they assign to being white when it comes to healthcare?

Note: This exercise is purposefully ambiguous to encourage participants to think about what actual value they assign to different activities or opportunities. Their answers will be subjective, and the cash value calculated will differ between participants. For instance, Joe may determine it is worth $50 to have a physician they trust and Kyndra may determine that if they had cancer in a given year it'd be worth $1 million to have a physician they trust. Aleesa may decide it's worth $35 not to fear discrimination in the exam room and Jack may determine it's of much greater value to them. When determining the cash value of care across their life, one participant may multiply their total by the number of years they expect to live. Another might add a fixed figure like $10,000 thinking that would be what they would expect to spend for critical care when an illness could have been prevented from a routine physical. Remember this is a thought experiment meant to get participants to think deeper about psychological and physical costs of the healthcare system and its history, not literal costs. The numerical assignment of value is meant to get participants to think concretely about what advantages some receive without even realizing it.

Additional note: If members of the group for whatever reason avoid health care or treatment, you may need to adapt the exercise to make it more of an imaginative exercise than a personal reflection. Give them a hypothetical person and situation from which to base their numbers.

reflect

Regrouping

After the engagement activities, give your group a few minutes to get up and walk around. Tell them how long they'll have for a break. Afterwards, gather them back together and prepare them for a bit of time for personal reflection.

Journaling

Ask participants to spend a few minutes journaling about the following:
Tell a story of a time (maybe even today) where you realized that the color of your skin has impacted your ability to feel confident and secure. Perhaps it was a time you realized you likely have an easier time getting access to housing or loans, or

could get trustworthy health care, or perhaps it was a time when you realized you likely had a more difficult time than others getting access to the same things. What does this story make you aware of about the experience of racial privilege?

Closing

Close time together by having each participant share one lingering question they have from today that they will keep reflecting on and one thing they are grateful for from their time together.

Sending

Give participants the handout outlining how to prepare for the next gathering. The handout includes the reading assignment, some guiding reflection questions, as well as a prompt for writing a portion of their spiritual story through the lens of race. Participants will write a more full account of their autobiography told through the lens of race during the fifth gathering, but this weekly writing will help them begin practicing that exercise of telling their stories.

For Next Gathering...

During the sending is a good time to ask for one person to share a part of their story at the next gathering. It's important to ask this person ahead of time so that they are prepared to share.

The prompt is located in the next gathering's facilitator guide and will be based on one of the journaling assignments on their handout.

It may be appropriate to coach them on how to tell their story so that it is succinct and focused, thereby setting the tone for the gathering by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

Rules for Monopoly Remixed (Activity 1)

Rules for Cars
Play Monopoly by the regular rules.

Rules for Boots
During the first four turns, at any point, the cars can choose (once) to demand all your property and all but $200 of your cash. Other than that, play by the regular rules of Monopoly.

Rules for Hats
Start the game with $200. For the first five turns, you may not have any more than $200 at a time. Give any additional money to the cars. For the first five turns, you are not allowed to buy any property. In the sixth and seventh turn, you may buy property but only properties between the "Go" square and the "Jail" square. After that, play by the normal rules of Monopoly.

This exercise is adapted from material originating from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk
Participant Preparation
FOR FIFTH GATHERING

Readings
Before the next gathering, please read part one of the curriculum. As you read, you will notice there are reflection questions and discussion topics in the text. You are welcome to review these and journal responses to all of these, but please note that you are not required to do so. Our work in gathering five will focus on sharing your autobiography through the lens of race. Please read on for more details.

The Spiritual Autobiography Told Through the Lens of Race

- Chapter 1: John Paddock
- Chapter 2: John Dorhauer
- Chapter 3: Da Vita D. McCallister
- Chapter 4: Traci Blackmon
- Chapter 5: Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

Reflecting on Readings
After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on their questions. You may choose to reflect in silent thought, process through dialogue with someone else, or use your journal as a way of recording your thoughts.

Journaling Your Story
Before the next gathering, spend time writing the stories of your own autobiography, paying particular attention to the way race has impacted your life's story. The authors call this a spiritual autobiography. This is different from a religious autobiography. A spiritual autobiography is meant to engage both the events and the emotional, spiritual impact of them.

As you write, use the stories you have written in your journal as a starting place, then add others. You may find yourself re-writing stories as you compile them or adding additional insights. If you are feeling unsure about how to go about writing your stories, revisit John Dorhauer's writing for inspiration on why this is an important practice and how to approach this process.

Questions you might consider while writing:

- How did you first come to learn about and recognize the difference between races?
- Who told you what it means to be white; what it means to be black; what it means to be Hispanic; what it means to be Native American?
- What value was attached to whiteness or blackness, to light skin or dark skin, to speaking a language other than English or having religious traditions other than your own? What do you remember feeling in those moments when words or actions expressed what others in your household or community thought or felt about racial identity?
- What did you see and experience in the world around you that affected how you relate to people of other races?
- Where and when have you been aware of your race? Think about where you were raised, your neighborhood and schooling, friends and acquaintances, spiritual community and work, family stories and traditions.

Participant Preparation

FOR FIFTH GATHERING

- What race are the majority of the people in your stories during your early childhood, elementary school, middle/junior high school, and high school years?
- If the majority of the characters from any of the time periods were white, what if anything did you learn about persons of color during that time? If the majority of the characters from any of the time were persons of color, what did you learn about white people during that time?
- Ponder how you think about yourself. Consider the ways in which white privilege, power, and racism have touched and influenced your story.
- What race and/or ethnicity were the images of people and the Divine in your church, religious, or spiritual settings (stained glass windows, photos, or icons, etc.)? If they were white, were you ever exposed to an image of another race? How did you feel when you saw the image of another race?

Give yourself adequate time to write. Some participants have found it helpful to write during a few different sittings. Remember that you are not carving the stories in stone. They will always be a work in progress as understanding, knowledge, and awareness grow.

fifth gathering

THE SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES TOLD THROUGH THE LENS OF RACE

prepare

What's behind all this?

The practice of telling one's story is an act of reflecting and of truth telling. It is through their own stories that people come to more fully understand themselves and the influences people, events, and lessons learned have had on their lives. As John Paddock articulates, this activity is not intended as an exercise in navel-gazing. It is an integral step in opening our eyes to truths that perhaps have gone mostly unseen or unnoticed. It is the beginning of a new engagement in the work of justice.

Participants' Perspectives

Participants have been drafting different autobiographical stories throughout these gatherings. For this gathering they have been asked to put together the more comprehensive story of their lives told through the lens of race. This process may be new to some. Others may have engaged in something similar before. Participants need to hear a word of grace as they begin sharing with one another. Some participants feel shame about their histories. Some feel incredibly vulnerable to speak the stories aloud. Some are nervous. Some are worried they'll be judged. Some are worried their words are not adequate. Some have already felt relief in just writing their story. Some are thankful for the opportunity to speak truth, believing that the truth will set them free. Some are looking forward to hearing one another and sharing. This will be a sacred and important opportunity for participants. Encourage them as they begin.

Where is this going?

During this gathering participants will be sharing their spiritual autobiography told through the lens of race with one another.

Consider this...

"Courage is telling our story, not being immune to criticism. Staying vulnerable is a risk we have to take if we want to experience connection."

-Brené Brown

welcome

Gathering

Continue to help participants by giving them an opportunity to learn one another's names and a bit more about one another. Allowing participants an opportunity to share about themselves in more casual ways at the beginning helps participants feel more comfortable speaking later.

Invite participants to share their name and, in two or three sentences, something about themselves the group can't tell by looking at them.

Centering Practice

Choose a centering practice from Spiritual Practice Resources at the back of the facilitator guide. These centering practices are an opportunity to help participants transition from the busyness of their lives into this space and time together and to be in the moment.

Keep this sharing to one or two sentences

The Focus

In today's gathering, participants have the opportunity to both share their spiritual autobiographies and to listen attentively to others as they share.

encounter

Revisit the group covenant created during the first gathering as you proceed into engaging the discussions and activities for this gathering.

Teach participants how to do active listening. Before breaking out into small groups, have a conversation about how to listen respectfully and fully to fellow participants and their stories. Active listening includes

- Facing the speaker and maintaining a compassionate gaze.
- Being attentive, but relaxed.
- Keeping an open mind. Suspending judgment or evaluation.
- Listening to the words and trying to picture what the speaker is saying.
- Not interrupting or imposing your own story. This is another person's time to speak their experience.
- Trying to feel what the speaker is feeling. Listening not only for what they are saying but also for the emotions they convey.
- Thanking the speaker for sharing their story.
- Waiting for the speaker to conclude before asking open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are questions that expand conversation, not direct it.

Indicate the physical spaces groups will be using if participants will be dividing into small groups. In this gathering participants will be sharing their autobiographies. Depending on the number of participants in your group, you will need to break up into small groups to allow people adequate time to share. Be sure that small groups have a place to meet that is private and quiet. This is important to create a safe, secure environment to help facilitate and support the vulnerable nature of sharing their stories.

engage

Sharing

In the small groups, each person is invited to take about 10 minutes to share their autobiography. Make sure groups are sized appropriately to allow adequate time for sharing. They may choose to read in full or to tell a few of the stories. Have another group member volunteer to monitor time so that all people have time to share. Gently let the storyteller know when they are approaching 10 minutes. The role of the others is to actively listen during each person's story.

Alternative option...

If participants want to remain in one large group for sharing their stories, shorten other sections of the gathering or spend multiple weeks on this material.

Reflection in Small Groups

If small groups finish storytelling early, refer them to reflection questions to help begin the reflection process. These questions could include

- What did you learn about yourself and your history while doing this exercise?
- What was difficult about writing and telling your story?
- What was life-giving about writing and telling your story?
- After telling your story, how is it with your soul and spirit?
- Do your stories, told through the lens of race, leave you wounded or whole?
- What areas of exploration do you take from this experience?

Reflection back in the Large Group

When sharing is completed, bring the large group back together. Participants' experiences may vary greatly, and they may be coming back into the larger group feeling wounded or whole, exposed or embraced, hesitant or liberated. Allow for space and awareness as participants regroup, and begin processing with these questions:

- How is it with your soul and spirit?
- Do your stories, told through the lens of race, leave you wounded or whole?
- What was one "ah-ha!" moment you had in this process?
- What is there that you feel compelled to do next as a result of telling your story?

reflect

Sending

Thank participants for sharing during this gathering. Give participants the handout outlining how to prepare for the next gathering. The handout includes the reading assignment, some guiding reflection questions, as well as a prompt for writing a portion of their spiritual story through the lens of race that they can add to the autobiography they have written for this gathering.

For Next Gathering...

During the sending is a good time to ask for one person to share a part of their story at the next gathering. It's important to ask this person ahead of time so that they are prepared to share.

The prompt is located in the next gathering's facilitator guide and will be based on one of the journaling assignments on their handout.

It may be appropriate to coach them on how to tell their story so that it is succinct and focused, thereby setting the tone for the gathering by modeling authenticity,

WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk
Participant Preparation
FOR SIXTH GATHERING

Readings
Before the next gathering, please read part four of the curriculum. As you read, you will notice there are reflection questions and discussion topics in the text. You are welcome to review these and journal responses to all of these, but please note that you are not required to do so. Our work in gathering six will focus on particular questions and topics. Please read on for more details.

On Becoming an Ally

- Chapter 1: Da Vita D. McCallister
- Chapter 2: John Paddock
- Chapter 3: Traci Blackmon
- Chapter 4: John Dorhauer
- Chapter 5: Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

Reflecting on Readings
After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on these questions. You may choose to reflect in silent thought, process through dialogue with someone else, or use your journal as a way of recording your thoughts.

- What does "being an ally" mean to the different authors? What is required of allies?
- What is a microaggression? When have you seen or heard microaggressions used? What role do they have in this conversation about being "allies while white"?
- What tools do you have to resist the temptation to become defensive when your privilege is being called out?

Journaling Your Story
In between gatherings, you are asked to spend time reflecting and recording stories from your own autobiography, paying particular attention to the way race has impacted your life's story.

Write a story about a time when you were an ally or accomplice in racial justice work. What was happening? How did you come to be a part of it? Who was directing the action? What did you experience? What did you learn?

Write a second story about a time when you made a mistake trying to advocate for racial justice or be an ally. How did you know you had made a mistake? What did you learn? How does what you've learned from that event shape how you behave or live now?

Note: This writing builds upon the autobiography you completed in gathering five.

Participant Preparation

FOR SIXTH GATHERING

Engage and Explore: Auditing Your Life

John Dorhauer speaks of a doing a white audit of a church. Using that same idea, do a white audit of your life. Look at the pictures and artwork on your walls. What percentage reflect white people or culture? Take a look at your books. Who wrote them? What percentage are written by white authors? Go a step further and figure out the percentages with regards the books on your shelf that you've actually read. Ask yourself if these figures reveal a hidden bias or commitment to whiteness as a preference. If it does, what new commitments or action comes next for you?

Next, think about your daily activities and the businesses you interact with. Make the list as comprehensive as you can, thinking big and small about all of the companies and organizations you use (cell phone providers, banks, restaurants, grocery stores, pharmacies, childcare providers, mechanics, etc.). What percentage are managed and owned by whites? Ask yourself if this figure reveals a hidden bias or commitment to whiteness as a preference. If it does, what new commitments or action comes next for you?

sixth gathering

ON BECOMING AN ALLY

prepare

What's behind all this?

After exploring a variety of ways white privilege works in the United States, this gathering is an invitation to consider how to move forward as an ally in the needed work ahead. Becoming an ally, using white privilege and other forms of privilege in productive ways to amplify the audience of those with firsthand experiences, and listening to communities of color about the support they need are lifelong activities. As Da Vita McCallister writes, "There is no neat way to dismantle a system built to dehumanize people. There are no magic words to gain instant credibility and deep trust. There is only a willingness to wade into the water, knowing that it has been troubled…"

Participants' Perspectives

For several gatherings, participants have been asked to "see with new eyes" how privilege works. Often participants want to jump into action to "fix" the situation, but as the authors speak to, there is no quick fix and for white people to assume they know how to fix the systems alone is misguided and detrimental. Part of what has likely been tough for participants is resisting their impulse to strategize a "fix" and to instead look closer and closer at the realities of systemic racism.

This gathering shifts the conversation to not only include an invitation to keep seeing the systemic privileging for what it is and to question it but also think through how to become an ally. It will be important in these discussions to nuance what it means to be an ally, particularly for white participants. As John Paddock names, Tarzan syndrome is easy for allies to catch but is detrimental for all. Participants may need help reorienting to a posture that pays attention and listens, to be a servant not a savior, to stand in solidarity while supporting the leadership of people of color by showing up and continuing to humbly learn from their stories and direction.

Materials needed for this gathering

- Copy of group covenant
- Journals and pens
- Equipment to stream or play video from the internet

Where is this going?

Participants will look carefully at what it means to be an ally. They will learn what being an ally requires of them and look at their commitments to what comes next in their growth and action.

Consider this…

"What I need is for people to come and work with us in the trenches and be there alongside us. It's not about being on the outside and saying 'Yes, I support you!' It's about 'not only do I support you, but I am here with you, I am rolling up my sleeves. What do I need to do?'"

-Feminista Jones

welcome

Gathering

Continue to help participants by giving them opportunity to learn one another's names and a bit more about one another. Allowing participants an opportunity to share about themselves in more casual ways at the beginning helps participants feel more comfortable speaking later.

Invite participants to share their name, and in two or three sentences, the best moment of their day.

Keep this sharing to two or three sentences.

Centering Practice

Choose a centering practice from Spiritual Practices Resource at the back of the facilitator guide. These centering practices are an opportunity to help participants transition from the busyness of their lives into this space and time together and to be in the moment.

The Focus

Let the participants know the focus for time together. In today's gathering, participants will explore what it is to be an ally, how to be an ally, and what questions they continue to have about using their privilege for changing systems that advantage some people and disadvantage other people.

Focusing through Story

This time is set aside for one person to a share one part of their autobiography, told through the lens of race. Facilitators should have invited this person to share prior to this gathering to ensure that their story will set the tone for your time together by modeling authenticity, vulnerability, and truth telling.

The prompt: Summarize the story you wrote when following the directions for "Journaling Your Story" in the "Participant Preparation for Gathering Six" handout. Reflect on a time when you were an ally or accomplice in racial justice work. What was happening? How did you come to be a part of it? Who was directing the action? What did you experience? What did you learn?

Sharing story...

When helping participants tell their stories, encourage them to be open, avoid philosophizing, and stay focused on a specific story.

Encourage them to tell a story where they weren't the hero. Help them be attentive to time, keeping their sharing to 3-5 minutes.

encounter

Watch the short video on the difference between being non-racist and anti-racist as a group. The video introduces the substantial difference between the two. A link to this video can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Revisit the group covenant created during the first gathering as you proceed into engaging the discussions and activities for this gathering.

Unpack the video with discussion:

- What is the distinction between being non-racist and anti-racist?
- Why is it not enough to just be non-racist?
- How does this relate to the reading about being an ally?

Media options...

If showing a video is not possible, play the audio for people to listen to.

engage

Listed below are different activities to help the group engage the readings more fully. More activity suggestions are listed here than will be feasible for one learning gathering. Facilitators should carefully select one (or more) activities that will engage their group's learning style and growing edges the most, and focus on those.

Activity 1: What Is an Ally?

(Focus on part four, chapters one, two, and three, in the curriculum.)
Begin conversation by asking about the authors' definition of being an ally for racial justice. What do they mean by it? After establishing a working definition and understanding among the group, have participants divide up into small groups of three or four. Ask them to look through chapters one, two, and three and make a list of different ways they name allies can be involved.

Give participants 10-12 minutes to read through the chapters and make their list. When the groups come back together, explore the items on the list more deeply. What are the suggestions? What are the cautions offered by the authors, particularly for white people engaging in the work of racial justice as allies? What comes next in their own growth or actions?

For some, there is fear that they will make mistakes in being allies or that they will offend others in some way. Look to Da Vita McCallister's questions to address their fears constructively:

- What's the worst mistake participants could imagine making as an ally? Invite them to describe it, and how they would overcome it.
- What emotional or spiritual tools do participants have to resist the temptation to become defensive if they make a mistake or are called out for making a mistake?

Activity 2: The Role of an Ally

(Focus on part four, chapter three, in the curriculum.)
Read through Traci Blackmon's essay aloud in the group. If possible have different readers for the different sections so participants hear the words from different voices.

Discuss with participants what words and phrases spoke to them the most? What ideas are most important for them to remember individually?

Deepen conversation by exploring Traci Blackmon's advice for being an ally in anti -racist work. Questions that could be asked: What does she mean "do your own work for your own sake" (number 2)? What does it mean for white people to "commit to doing white people's work" (number 5)? What does it look like to use whatever privilege you have to make space for others to tell their own stories (number 7)?

Expand conversation to the second part of Traci Blackmon's writing about what's actually happening when we name white privilege for what it is. What echoes for participants in her writing? What mechanisms do people have or what do people need to be able to be "called out" and still continue to show up, even when it's hard (number 6)? What can participants do to give themselves and others space for grace (number 10)?

Activity 3: White Audit

(Focus on part four, chapter four, in the curriculum.)
Participants were asked to do a white audit of their lives as a way of discovering if/how there is a hidden commitment to whiteness as a preference. Ask participants to reflect on what they found, encourage deeper reflection by asking them questions. (Examples: why do you think you have mostly white authors on your bookshelf, or why are most of the business owners you work with white?) Ask them what's at stake if there is a clear preference for whiteness in their everyday lives, media, business dealings, etc.?

In the exercise, participants were asked to consider what new commitments or actions may come next for them as a result of any self-discovery, and they may begin discussing those, but ask them to hold on to that portion of their reflection until later in the conversation so that they can sit in the tension rather than jump prematurely to "solutions."

Media options...

A link to a resource that teaches how to apologize after getting called out for offensive or hurtful words or behavior can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Activity 4: Attitudes and Actions

(Focus on part four, chapter five, in the curriculum.)
One area of resistance in conversations about race is what Stephen Ray calls the "white moral self-regard." It is the idea that white people believe that only a minority of whites hold anti-black views and act on them. But as Stephen Ray points out, this is a mis-assessment. A majority of white people not only hold anti-black views but also act upon them in their everyday lives in microaggressions.

Pause within the group and focus conversation on what microaggressions are, what they sound or look like, and how/why microaggressions perpetuate anti-black attitudes and actions. A link to a good video that could be shown to the group to explain microagressions can be found at http://privilege.uccpages.org and in the resource section of this guide.

Stephen Ray proposes two rules for being an ally while white. Read the two rules and unpack their meaning and implications. If you are white, think about a time when you found it hard to believe or accept a claim by a person of color that they were being discriminated against. Why didn't you believe them? Looking back, what other factors were at play in your reaction to their stories?

Talk about what it means to have privilege, and name two or three ways that participants can utilize whatever privilege they have as an ally. Invite participants to take notes in their journals, then circle one or two next steps in their lives.

Activity 5: What Comes Next

The group may wish to take time to discuss whether it wants to keep meeting and learning together in some way. Use time here to brainstorm or determine next steps.

reflect

Regrouping

After the engagement activities, give your group a few minutes to get up and walk around. Tell them how long they'll have for a break. Afterwards, gather them back together and prepare them for a bit of time for personal reflection.

Journaling

Ask participants to spend a few minutes journaling about the following:

How is it with your spirit and the core of your being? What was your biggest ah-ha revelation during these conversations? As time together closes, what questions are you grappling with? What do you need to continue to learn about?

Closing

Close time together by having each participant share one thought from today that they will keep reflecting on and one thing they are grateful for from their time together.

Sending

Send participants out with words of blessing and thanksgiving. See the Spiritual Practices Resources in this guide for suggestions or offer one that speaks uniquely to the group.

Resources

Meditations

Centering Practice

Our breathing embodies a rhythm of ebb and flow. Each time we inhale, we draw energy into our bodies; as we exhale, we release what our body no longer needs. Our breathing is such a common thing, yet such a miracle. Our breathing is pure grace. Across traditions, many believe our physical breath is an apt symbol of the Spirit and our spirit. In the many languages, the words for "breath" and "spirit" are the same.

Slow, deliberate breathing can become for us, as embodied persons, a spiritual exercise. There is a direct correlation between rapid, shallow breathing and rapid, shallow thinking. When we feel threatened, stressed or upset, we breathe quickly, sometimes almost panting. Taking slow deliberate breaths can help us to reconnect to the greater Spirit, to our own spirit and to one another.

Pause for a moment and notice your breath.
Do not attempt to control it; just observe yourself as you inhale and exhale.

Adjust the position of your body.
Sit up straight but relaxed by placing your feet on the floor or by sitting on a cushion in a lotus or half-lotus position.
Close your eyes fully or partially by looking toward the ground.
Rest your hands gently in your lap.

Begin breathing slowly and deeply.
Observe your breath as it enters your nostrils and fills your diaphragm.
Notice the sensation as your breath is released through your nostrils.

As you breathe, you may notice that your body will begin to relax. However, your mind may continue to move rapidly. In order to quiet and calm your mind, you may find it helpful to imagine that you are

Breathing in peace . . . letting go of fear.
Breathing in compassion . . . letting go of judgment.
Breathing in wholeness . . . letting go of fragmentation.
Breathing in rest . . . letting go of weariness.

Continue to breathe at your own pace.
As your mind wanders, and it will, gently return to your breath.

When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

A Meditation on Lovingkindness

The following meditation is a 2,500-year-old practice that uses repeated phrases, images, and feelings to evoke lovingkindness and friendliness toward oneself and others.

Sit in a comfortable fashion. Let your body relax and be at rest. As best you can, let your mind be quiet, letting go of plans and preoccupations. Then begin to recite inwardly the following phrases directed to yourself. You begin with yourself because without loving yourself it is almost impossible to love others.

May I be filled with lovingkindness.
May I be well.
May I be peaceful and at ease.
May I be happy.

When you feel ready, in the same meditation period you can gradually expand the focus of your loving-kindness to include others. After yourself, choose a benefactor, someone in your life who has truly cared for you. Picture them and carefully recite the same phrases. May they be filled with lovingkindness, and so forth. When loving-kindness for your benefactor has developed, begin to include other people you love in the meditation, picturing them and reciting the same phrases, evoking a sense of loving-kindness for them.

After this you can gradually begin to include others: friends, community members, neighbors, people everywhere, animals, the whole earth, and all beings. Then you can even experiment with including the most difficult people in your life, wishing that they, too, be filled with loving-kindness and peace.

Then you can learn to practice it anywhere. You can use this meditation in traffic jams, in buses and airplanes, in doctors' waiting rooms, and in a thousand other circumstances. As you silently practice this lovingkindness meditation among people, you will immediately feel a wonderful connection with them—the power of lovingkindness. It will calm your life and keep you connected to your heart.

Adapted from the work of Jack Kornfield.
A Path with Heart: A Guide Through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life.
https://jackkornfield.com/meditation-on-lovingkindness/

Mind Like Sky

Meditation comes alive through a growing capacity to release our habitual entanglement in the stories and plans, conflicts and worries that make up the small sense of self, and to rest in awareness. In meditation we do this simply by acknowledging the moment-to-moment changing conditions. Developing this capacity to rest in awareness nourishes concentration, which stabilizes and clarifies the mind, and wisdom, that sees things as they are.

When you begin, sit comfortably and at ease. Let your body be at rest and your breathing be natural. Close your eyes. Take several full breaths and let each release gently. Allow yourself to be still.

Now shift awareness away from the breath. Begin to listen to the play of sounds around you. Notice those that are loud and soft, far and near. Just listen. Notice how all sounds arise and vanish, leaving no trace. Listen for a time in a relaxed, open way.

As you listen, let yourself sense or imagine that your mind is not limited to your head. Sense that your mind is expanding to be like the sky-open, clear, vast like space. There is no inside or outside. Let the awareness of your mind extend in every direction like the sky.

Relax in this openness and just listen. Let the sounds that come and go, whether far or near, be like clouds in the vast sky of your own awareness. The play of sounds moves through the sky, appearing and disappearing without resistance. Be aware of your breathing.

As you rest, notice how thoughts and images also arise and vanish like sounds. Let the thoughts and images come and go without struggle or resistance. Problems, possibilities, joys and sorrows come and go like clouds in the clear sky of mind.

After a time, let this awareness notice the body. Become aware of how the sensations of breath and body float and change in the same open sky of awareness. The breath breathes itself, it moves like a breeze. Rest in this openness. Let sensations float and change. Allow all thoughts and images, feelings and sounds to come and go like clouds in the clear open space of awareness.

The Buddha said, "O Nobly Born, remember the pure open sky of your own true nature. Return to it. Trust it. It is home."

This meditation is adapted from the work of Jack Kornfield, *The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness and Peace.*
https://jackkornfield.com/a-mind-like-sky/

Visualization

To work with a sacred image, choose someone who inspires you, St. Francis or Kwan Yin the goddess of infinite mercy, Jesus or Mary, Buddha or Tara. Rest your gaze on them and the feeling they embody steadily and accurately. Open and close your eyes gently and repeatedly as you try to see the vision inside. Be easy. Start with whatever you can see, and like meditating on the breath, stay focused on this initial image. See the sacred image as filled with light, and let all the light, love and illumination pour from them into you.

Now take the next step. Imagine that whoever you visualize can come inside your own body and mind. Release your personality and let St. Francis or Kwan Yin enter into your heart and fill you completely with their compassion, courage, purity, luminous radiance. Feel what it is like to inwardly become this being.

Dwell in this state for a period of time. Recognize that you can embody this energy, that you can allow it to fill every cell of your being, every corner of your consciousness. See the world with the eyes of Buddha or St. Francis; sense that you are holy. Practice this repeatedly until it becomes more natural to your heart than your "ordinary" identity.

And then, at the end of each period of visualization, release the image from your body, see it in front of you again and then dissolve it into emptiness. Notice how consciousness itself creates and erases all appearances. Return and rest in pure awareness, allow the natural world of your own body and mind to reappear, still secretly infused with the sacred consciousness of this vision.

This meditation is adapted from the work Jack Kornfield, *The Wise Heart.*
https://jackkornfield.com/practice-visualization/

Poetry

The Gift to Sing

by James Weldon Johnson

Sometimes the mist overhangs my path,
And blackening clouds about me cling;
But, oh, I have a magic way
To turn the gloom to cheerful day—
    I softly sing.
And if the way grows darker still,
Shadowed by Sorrow's somber wing,
With glad defiance in my throat,
I pierce the darkness with a note,
    And sing, and sing.
I brood not over the broken past,
Nor dread whatever time may bring;
No nights are dark, no days are long,
While in my heart there swells a song,
    And I can sing.

Invitation to Love

By Paul Laurence Dunbar

Come when the nights are bright with stars
Or come when the moon is mellow;
Come when the sun his golden bars
Drops on the hay-field yellow.
Come in the twilight soft and gray,
Come in the night or come in the day,
Come, O love, whene'er you may,
And you are welcome, welcome.
You are sweet, O Love, dear Love,
You are soft as the nesting dove.
Come to my heart and bring it to rest
As the bird flies home to its welcome nest.
Come when my heart is full of grief
Or when my heart is merry;
Come with the falling of the leaf
Or with the redd'ning cherry.
Come when the year's first blossom blows,
Come when the summer gleams and glows,
Come with the winter's drifting snows,
And you are welcome, welcome.

You Would Do Well to be Attentive

By Rachel Hackenberg

You would do well to be attentive:
attentive to Love
as to a lamp
at midnight

attentive to Solidarity
as to an oasis
in the desert

attentive to Glory
as to a lullaby
at bedtime

attentive to Humility
as to a seed
freshly planted

attentive to Hospitality
as to a path
through the wilderness.

Thou our love and companion,
You our aspiration and embarrassment,
Most Holy Host of Heaven,
we attend to you
with all heart and soul and strength.

http://rachelhackenberg.com/blog/

Traditional Scottish Blessing

If there is righteousness in the heart,
If there is righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation,
there will be peace in the world.
So let it be.

Prayers and Blessings

God of the Living: A Blessing

By Jan Richardson

When the wall
between the worlds
is too firm,
too close.
When it seems
all solidity
and sharp edges.
When every morning
you wake as if
flattened against it,
its forbidding presence
fairly pressing the breath
from you
all over again.
Then may you be given
a glimpse
of how weak the wall
and how strong what stirs
on the other side,
breathing with you
and blessing you
still,
forever bound to you
but freeing you
into this living,
into this world
so much wider
than you ever knew.

from *The Cure for Sorrow,* http://paintedprayerbook.com

Losing the GPS

Guiding Spirit, let us lose the GPS that takes us to the hoped for destination by way of the quickest or most direct route. Instead, let us get lost. Let us meander. Let us not be fearful in carving out new paths. Give us companions for the journey. Give us time enough to talk along the way. Amen.

Messy Community

Holy One, we see you not directly but in others. In their smiles and joy, and in their love. It is no wonder you call us into community. Community is beautiful. But we know community is often messy and complicated. We are messy and complicated, too. Even this prayer does not have a neat answer or a clear conclusion. Just a hope and an amen.

Speak of Hope

Spirit of Love, sing us your song. Not to put us to sleep, but wake us up to your hope for us, for one another, for our community, and for the world. Amen.

Blessing-Final Gathering

Solace Blessing

That's it.
That's all this blessing
knows how to do:
Shine your shoes.
Fill your refrigerator.
Water your plants.
Make some soup.
All the things
you cannot think
to do yourself
when the world
has come apart,
when nothing
will be normal
again.
Somehow
this blessing knows
precisely what you need,
even before
you know.
It sees what will bring
the deepest solace
for you.
It senses what will offer
the kindest grace.
And so it will step
with such quietness
into the ordinary moments
where the absence
is the deepest.
It will enter
with such tenderness
into the hours
where the sorrow
is most keen.
You do not even
have to ask.
Just leave it open—
your door,
your heart,
your day
in every aching moment
it holds.
See what solace
spills through the gaps
your sorrow has torn.
See what comfort
comes to visit,
holding out its gifts
in each compassionate hand.

from *The Cure for Sorrow,* http://paintedprayerbook.com

Songs

"Don't Be Afraid" by John Bell

http://www.musicthatmakescommunity.org/zacharywalter/don_t_be_afraid

"Help Somebody" by Susan Werner

http://susanwerner.com/music/

"I am Sending You Light" by Melanie DeMore
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hE9SMaaXXF4

"Open My Heart" by Ana Hernandez
http://www.musicthatmakescommunity.org/open_my_heart

"Put One Foot in Front of the Other and Lead With Love" by Melanie DeMore
https://youtu.be/9w22S8foSbk

"Salamu Alekum" by Tamika and Benjamin Jancewitz
http://www.musicthatmakescommunity.org/zacharywalter/salamu_alekum

"Standing Stone" by Melanie DeMore
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpMW8-Nx4T0

"This Little Light of Mine"
http://www.hymnary.org/text/this_little_light_of_mine_im_gonna_let
Use verses applicable to your group. It may be helpful to put the song in context. This was Ella Baker's favorite song. She was one of the powerful and brave leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the American Civil Rights Movement.

"What We Need is Here" by Amy McCreath
http://www.musicthatmakescommunity.org/what_we_need_is_here

Media Links

Below are the links to media and videos used in the gatherings. These links are also found online at http://privilege.uccpages.org.

In Gathering One

"Deconstructing White Privilege" by Dr. Robin Di Angelo
https://vimeo.com/147760743

"5 Things You Should Know about Racism," Decoded with Franchesca Ramsey
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eTWZ80z9EE

"Why Does Privilege Make People So Angry?" Decoded with Franchesca Ramsey
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeYpvV3eRhY

In Gathering Two

"Everyday Racism: What Should We Do" by the Guardian
https://youtu.be/uZUvjAJGFkM?list=PLa_1MA_DEorGlLCiC9HVVIoMUlgCozy8I

Excerpt from StarTrek, "Lokai and Bele"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi7QQ5pO7_A

A Critical Look at the History of Columbus
http://ed.ted.com/lessons/history-vs-christopher-columbus-alex-gendler

Movie trailer from *Hidden Figures (2016)*
http://www.foxmovies.com/movies/hidden-figures

Full Speech from John Brown
http://www.nationalcenter.org/JohnBrown'sSpeech.html

Brief highlights John Brown's the speech
http://www.history.com/topics/john-brown/videos/john-browns-last-speech

media and video resources

In Gathering Three

"Racism Is Real," by Brave New Films
It is a visual depictions of the statistics and studies from the readings.
https://youtu.be/fTcSVQJ2h8g

TED Talk by Kandice Sumner, "How America's Public Schools Keep Kids in Poverty"
https://www.ted.com/talks/kandice_sumner_how_america_s_public_schools_keep_kids_in_poverty?utm_source=tedcomshare&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=tedspread

Racial Dot Map
http://demographics.coopercenter.org/Racial-Dot-Map/?q=demographics/Racial-Dot-Map

Census Maps
www.census.gov

In Gathering Four

Selection from Tim Wise,"Colorblind Denial and White Privilege"
https://youtu.be/V13nqzefyoE

Full Lecture, Tim Wise,"White Privilege, Racism, White Denial & The Cost of Inequality" from which "Colorblind Denial and White Privilege" is excerpted
https://youtu.be/hOB_ix10--I

In Gathering Six

The Difference Between Being Non-racist and Anti Racist
https://youtu.be/uZUvjAJGFkM?list=PLa_1MA_DEorGlLCiC9HVVIoMUlgCozy8I

Understanding Microaggressions
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_85JVcniE_M

Getting Called Out: How to Apologize https://youtu.be/C8xJXKYL8pU