



Charlottesville's Catholic Worker Community

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Racism and Our Catholic Response, Session 1

What kind of space are we be invited to enter into?

- Group agreements
 - We will try to remain rooted in our common identity as beloved ones of God; we will refrain from blaming or shaming self or others.
 - We will appreciate how we are different; we will refrain from attempts to fix, save, or set each other straight.
 - We will listen with the heart, speak from our own experience, and be aware of our participation. **WAIT** concept: "Why Am I Talking?" or "Why Aren't I Talking?" Encourage folks to find someone to debrief with afterward, especially if they know they have a lot of passionate opinions, ideas, or feelings. There won't be time to express all that during the sessions and that's OK.
 - We will honor confidentiality.
- Learning zones: we aim to be outside our comfort zone, in a learning zone. [Illustration](#). Important to note that our comfort zones are affected by upon our emotional and physical state in that moment, and that we might have a large comfort zone for certain topics and a smaller zone for others.

Reading: Psalms 36:6-9

Handout

Lord, your constant love reaches the heavens
Your faithfulness extends to the skies

**Your righteousness is towering like the mountains
Your justice is like the depths of the sea**

We find protection under the shadow of your wings
We feast on the abundant food you provide

**You are the source of all life
And because of your light, we see the light.**

Moment of silence

1. What is your ethnic and/or cultural heritage? What are you most proud of from that heritage?
2. **When** and **how** did you first become aware that there was such a thing as racial and ethnic differences, and that people were treated differently on the basis of those differences?

Introductions

Name and something you'd like to get from this session or series.

Topic 1: [Dialogue vs. debate and definitions](#)²

Handout

Dialogue vs. Debate - read aloud, keep for reference. There are times and places for debate, especially when those involved agree beforehand to debate. Dialogue can be a spiritual practice which helps us appreciate and understand another as being beloved by God.

Definitions of prejudice, bias, bigotry, stereotyping and scapegoating. Not essential for us to agree on these definitions word by word. Invite conversations in groups of 2-3 to consider how these definitions may differ from our understanding or usage of these words. What is significant is that each of these practices is a barrier to dialogue, and to seeing the full humanity of another person.

Topic 2: Bias

Videos

Watch Ted Talk by Verna Myers "[How to Overcome Our Biases? Walk Boldly Toward Them](#)" Full video is 17 minutes, for shorter version, begin at 3:09 for her three calls to action: get of our denial about our biases; move toward young black men and others who are different than how we identify; if we see something, say something.

Preview: Watch 5 minute video "A Conversation about Growing Up Black" from the New York Times page "[25 Mini-Films for Exploring Race, Bias, and Identity with Students](#)" Next week: types of racism and privilege.

Concluding Reflections

5 minutes for silence, personal journaling, or writing a note to someone (could be evaluation, suggestions)

Closing Prayer

Our Father

^{1,2}Taken from [Seeing the Face of God in Each Other: Antiracism Training Manual](#) from the Episcopal Church: See Personal Inventory Questions, Guidelines for Dialogue vs. Debate, and Some Dialogue Definitions.