



Racism 101

| *Toward a definition of racism and deeper understanding of its many aspects.*

Goal for the Session

Participants will expand and build upon their understanding of race and racism by defining the various facets of these terms.

Preparing for the Session

- This study is part of the Racism Study Pack. Your group may use this study alone, although we suggest you use it along with the other studies in the pack. The following is the suggested order of the study pack, although you may study in any order your group chooses.
 - Why Is It So Difficult to Talk about Racism?
 - Racism 101
 - The Bible and Racism
 - A History of Racism in the United States
 - White Privilege
 - Is Affirmative Action Still Needed?
 - Do Segregated Churches Imply Racism?
- This one-session study does not assume participants have arrived having read the Participant Handout. However, it is highly recommended that the leader either e-mail studies to participants the week before each session studied, or make copies of the upcoming session's handout and distribute them to participants at the end of each session.

Session at a Glance

OPENING

- Prayer
- Review

ENGAGING

- Deepening our definitions
- Making distinctions
- Understanding the nuances

RESPONDING

- Committing to challenging racism

CLOSING

- Prayer

- Activity 3 requires that each participant have a copy of all eight scenarios found in the appendix of this Leader's Guide. Make a copy of that page for each participant and cut out the scenarios so that participants can tape them onto the piece of newsprint in the activity.
- Discussions about race and racism ideally take place with a mixed group of people representing a diverse heritage. However, this is not always possible and having a well-planned and thoughtful discussion is a good first step. Please see "Additional Teaching Tips" at the end of this Leader's Guide for suggestions.

- Prayerfully read through both the Participant Hand-out and this Leader’s Guide. Make notes in the areas that you feel will be challenging. If necessary, write out a script.
- Identify your own struggles with race and racism in order to avoid being drawn into any negative assumptions.
- If your group already discussed the recommended session “Why Is It So Difficult to Talk about Racism?” hang up the newsprint with definitions of race and racism produced by the participants. During this session you will be elaborating upon these initial definitions and may wish to use the same sheets as a reference tool.

Materials Needed

- Pens/pencil
- Paper
- Newsprint
- Marker
- Note card
- Tape

Teaching Tip

- For any fruitful dialogue to occur there has to be a safe environment. Be careful that no one in the group attacks another participant who expresses a negative opinion. This is a time for open dialogue.
- During this session there will be many terms that will be defined and this can become overwhelming. Encourage participants to keep an individual journal of terms as you write them out during the session.

Opening (5 minutes)

1. Prayer

You may pray the prayer below or one of your own choosing.

God of love and justice, we ask for your reconciling Spirit to be present with us here today. May we speak and listen with love and compassion. Increase our understanding of how to move toward becoming

an inclusive society and church. Most of all, give us the desire and strength to daily challenge the oppressive structures that bind our sisters and brothers. **Amen.**

2. Review

Using the definitions generated from “Why Is It So Difficult to Talk about Racism?” review how they changed. If you are using this session independently, then invite participants to define race and racism.

Exploring (30 minutes)

3. Deepening Our Definitions

Post three sheets of newsprint on the wall. On top of each sheet write **Racism is . . .**

On one sheet draw two columns and label one column “intentional” and the other “unintentional.” Draw two columns on the second sheet with one column titled “overt” and the other “covert.” Do likewise to the last sheet but title one column “connected to privilege” and the other “connected to power.”

Tape the sheets around the room. Distribute eight slips of paper with the eight scenarios on the appendix to each participant. Ask participants to tape the scenarios under the column they believe the scenarios represent. Is the scenario an example of intentional, unintentional, overt, covert racism, or connected to power or privilege? After the participants have taped their scenarios, invite everyone back together as a group and discuss each sheet. There may be several scenarios that could fall under more than one column. The objective is to understand the multiple manifestations of racism. Invite participants to explain their choices and to take notes if necessary.

Teaching Tip: Depending on the nature of your group, consider pairing up and giving each pair the eight slips of paper to work on together.

4. Making Distinctions

On a sheet of newsprint draw three columns. Label one “racial prejudice,” the second one “racial stereotyping,” and the third “racial discrimination.” As a group, define each phrase, give an example, and make a distinction between each one and the others. Once again, invite participants to take notes.

5. Understanding the Nuances

If there is time, divide the participants into five groups. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Assign each group one of the five types of racism—individual/personal, institutional/systemic/structural, cultural, internalized, and environmental. Explain that each group should select a scribe and spokesperson. Using the Participant Handout, invite each group to define the type of racism in their own words, give an example, and explain why this is detrimental to our society as a whole and not just to those who are oppressed. After all groups have completed their task, invite each one to present and discuss as a whole group. If possible, tape up each group's response and keep it visible during the other sessions.

Responding (5 minutes)

6. Committing to Challenging Racism

Give each participant a note card. Invite participants to write down one commitment they are willing to make to challenge racism. Some may wish to draw from the list in the Participant Handout.

Closing (5 minutes)

7. Prayer

You may pray the following or one of your own choosing.

O God, our judge and redeemer,
Give us brave hearts and minds to make
Changes within ourselves and lovingly
Invite others to the journey. **Amen.**

Teaching Alternatives

- Use the same type of activity for steps 4 and 5 as you did in step 3.
- Place words and definitions around the room. Invite participants to read and write down information that was new, surprising, or needs to be elaborated. Share insights.
- Write words on note cards and randomly distribute to the participants. Invite them to define the word and give an example.

About the Writer

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For More Information

Books

- Benjamin Demott, *The Trouble With Friendship: Why Americans Can't Think Straight about Race* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995).
- David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
- Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 2002).
- Eric H. F. Law, *Sacred Acts, Holy Change* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002).
- Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993).
- Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007).
- Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2008).
- Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2003).
- Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

Internet Sites

AntiRacism.net. An online resource for the activist community and a portal offering information about anti-racism activities to the general public: <http://www.antiracism.net>. Their Web site includes:

- an international online directory of social justice organizations.
- both issue-specific and news digest listservs.
- a calendar for posting regional, national, international events.
- a news portal for publishing efforts and back-grounds on issues.

CivilRights.org. This Web site is sponsored by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a broad coalition of national civil rights and labor organizations: <http://www.civilrights.org>.

Films and Videos

Blue Eyed, DVD, directed by Bertram Verhaag (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1996)—documentary on Jane Elliott, inventor of the blue-eyed/brown-eyed classroom experiment on prejudice; includes powerful footage of a workshop done with teachers, www.newsreel.org.

The Color of Fear, DVD, directed by Lee Mun Wah (Stir-fry Productions, 1995)—explosive dialogue among white, black, and Asian men about the color lines that divide them, www.stirfryseminars.com. An excellent documentary.

Ethnic Notions, DVD, directed by Marlon Riggs (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1986)—classic documentary graphically exposing the history of racist stereotyping from the 1830s to the 1970s, <http://newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0026>.

Family Name, DVD, directed by Macky Alston (New York: Docurama, 2008), see <http://www.pbs.org/pov/familyname/>.

Imitation of Life, DVD, 1934 version (Gaumont Columbia Tristar, 2007); DVD, 1959 version (Universal Studios, 2003). Based on the novel of the same name by Fan-

nie Hurst (1932), this story of black-white dependency and passing was twice made into a Hollywood blockbuster. The 1934 version, directed by John Stahl, preserves the novel's story of the "Aunt Jemima" stereotype while the 1959 update, directed by Douglas Sirk, makes the "tragic mulatta" tale into a contemporary story of sexualized tragedy.

Jefferson's Blood, produced by Thomas Lennon; narrated by Shelby Steele (*Frontline*, PBS, 2000), <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/>. PBS learning site based on their video about Thomas Jefferson's offspring by his slave Sally Hemings, including interviews with "white" and "black" relatives today who are struggling with the question of their own racial identity.

Pinky, DVD, directed by Elia Kazan (1949, 20th Century Fox, 2006)—modern "tragic mulatta" tale updated by white Hollywood liberals as a statement against Southern racism; features a great performance by Ethel Waters.

Race: The Power of an Illusion, DVD, video, directed by Christine Herbes-Sommers (California Newsreel, 2003), www.newsreel.org (downloadable study/facilitators guide).

Appendix: Scenarios for Activity 3

The personnel committee's policy is to interview members of various racial groups to meet the organization's diversity employment requirements. They continually select members of one racial group for the final candidate pool.

A teacher provides a reading list of contemporary authors to the class. The list is not racially diverse.

Members of specific racial groups are steered by a real estate agent to look at housing only in a particular neighborhood. All other clients are offered several options.

A congregation's outsourced operating functions are always provided by individuals or businesses owned by members of one racial group.

Members of particular racial/ethnic groups are racially profiled, causing them to be stopped by police while driving when no laws have been broken.

A health facility's expansion plans result in the displacement of community residents who are mostly members of one racial and economic group.

Some members of a college's student activities committee challenge the nomination for committee president of someone from a different racial group, stating, "We've never had a . . . in that position and now may not be the time."

A security guard routinely interrogates members of certain racial/ethnic groups while allowing others to simply pass by.

Additional Teaching Tips for Various Types of Groups

Leading a session on racism is ideally accomplished with a diverse group of participants representing a variety of heritages. But unfortunately this is not always possible or realistic. Given these circumstances we have provided tips for facilitating these sessions in a fruitful manner.

General Guidelines

- Remind participants that these sessions are a starting point. The work to challenge racism is ongoing. Remind yourself that conversations dealing with racism are difficult and uncomfortable. This is normal.
- All voices need to be heard and respected. Be mindful that no one is targeted for their views. Encourage everyone to listen to each other and the writers of the sessions without being defensive.
- Be mindful that the conversation stays on topic with time to share experience, analysis, and hopes for the future.
- Identify your own struggles with race and racism in order to check any negative assumptions or stereotypes you may have.

All-White Congregations

- Be alert that the conversation stays on topic and does not downplay the effect of racism.
- An all-white conversation may provide a forum for an honest expression of views. Issues of white guilt and denial are normal if the discussion is fruitful. Address these issues and avoid the tendency to downplay or ignore them.
- Racism cannot be and is not an issue only for people of color. Encourage participants to take ownership.

Primarily White Group with a Few People of Color

- Be alert to statements or questions that ask the person of color to make a sweeping generalization for all people of color. For example: What do people of color need or want?
- Racism must be challenged together by people of color and white people. Watch for manifestations of white guilt in the form of denial.
- If possible, have two facilitators, one white and one person of color.
- This group makeup can be tricky because the power dynamic so closely mirrors what people of color experience in many aspects of their lives. Be mindful that the people of color in the room don't feel pressured to "educate" the white participants about race or racism. Also, make sure that the experiences of the people of color don't get sidetracked, downplayed, or explained away even if there is disagreement in the room.

Primarily People of Color with a Few White People

- The white participants may feel unable to express themselves openly, resulting in a lack of honesty. Be careful to keep the conversation from becoming accusatory.
- If possible, have two facilitators, one white and one person of color.

Group with All People of Color

- Facilitator must be a person of color for honest exchange.
- Not all people of color will agree about what the definitions or implications of racism are in society or in their lives, so don't assume opinions or feel the need to force consensus. Instead, call participants to a spirit of support amid different experiences, creative collaboration, and coalition building.