

Keep Talking, Start Doing

Ten Ways to Deepen Your Congregation's Multiculturalism Journey

The work of anti-racist multiculturalism is central to who we are as a faith community; and it is about shifting our cultures, not just shifting our numbers. Whether you're just beginning this journey or you've been on the path for many years, we hope you will find useful suggestions within this brief resource, which offers some tools to help you do, or continue to do, intentional work within your community around anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism. Unless we, as faith communities, ground ourselves in a commitment to welcome all people not as unfamiliar visitors, but as siblings in spirit, newcomers to be embraced with open arms, we will not easily progress toward the vision of Beloved Community toward which we are striving.

With that in mind, here are ten ideas for deepening your engagement with this work:

- 1. Find allies in the work.** Regardless of where your congregation is on the journey, continuously engage in discerning who your allies are in your congregation. Empower allies to help provide leadership and people-power for the work. Support each other by socializing, having fun inside and outside church walls together, and building mutually-supportive relationships. If at all possible, get the leaders of your congregation on board.
- 2. Build on existing anti-oppression work within your community;** this can often be a useful entry point for congregations to approach anti-oppression work that is new to them. For example, if your congregation has a proud history of being welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, hold conversations, workshops, and panels that discuss the particular ways that homophobia, transphobia, and classism affect communities of color and how issues of race, ethnicity, and/or class can play out within communities of queer-identified folks.
- 3. Prepare the way for cultural change by engaging people in diverse and creative ways based on differing learning styles.** Build an ongoing series of offerings: start a film series with discussions, host panels with invited guests, invite a guest speaker for a Sunday service, create a “common read” program with facilitated discussion, and/or engage conversations about why anti-racism and multiculturalism are central to our faith tradition.
 - Some great common read options: *Soul Work* by Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones; *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (2nd ed.) by Allan G. Johnson; and *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit* by Juana Bordas. You can also find out about the UUA’s association-wide common read here: www.uua.org/re/multigenerational/read
 - Multicultural Growth & Witness hosts a video loan library—check it out! www.uua.org/multiculturalism/discuss/158973.shtml
- 4. Hold trainings for your Welcome/Greeting Committee** using *Multicultural Welcome: A Resource for Greeters in Unitarian Universalist Congregations*—this new resource offers a multicultural lens on how to welcome newcomers, from their visit to your website to the moment they walk through the door, through the service and in your follow-up with them.
 - Download the resource here: www.uua.org/documents/idbm/multicultural_welcome.pdf

5. **Create opportunities for cross-cultural experiences.** Congregations don't become welcoming and multicultural merely by hoping people with historically marginalized identities will visit and stay; we have to shift our practices and get out of our comfort zones. Bring multiculturalism into your religious education for all ages. Work cross-cultural experiences appropriately into worship services—think strategically, act accountably. Invite local professional musicians to perform, and compensate them fairly. Identify cultural groups that are present in your community but not in your congregation, and build relationships with local organizations that serve those groups. Attend their events, open your ears and eyes to the culture of those organizations, and ask how you can be of service.
6. **Work with the Building the World We Dream About program.** You might consider beginning with an introductory workshop for one or more of your congregation's committees (contact multicultural@uua.org for more info) and then offering the full program to the congregation at large.
 - Find out more about Building the World We Dream About: <http://bit.ly/MGWbuilding>
7. **Foster anti-racist, multicultural educational opportunities and experiences for leaders and members.** Hold yearly anti-racism leadership development/trainings and ask that your leaders attend. One congregation that has done this to good effect is the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, CA (www.uuoakland.org/jtw). Send small groups to trainings and experiences in the wider world, such as the Living Legacy Pilgrimage (through the UUA/UUSC), the Mosaic Makers conference hosted by Multicultural Growth & Witness or the Leading Edge Conference at Middle Collegiate Church in New York, NY, or workshops through the Highlander Center and the Kaleidoscope Institute.
8. **Incorporate anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism work into the everyday life of your congregation.** Familiarize yourself with Rev. Eric Law's process of mutual invitation and infuse this and other best practices into your congregational life and business. Build a common language and vision for this work. Have each member of your staff or lay leadership team set a personal goal at the beginning of the year for how to take responsibility for anti-racist multiculturalism in their own work, and check in around those goals regularly.
 - Read about mutual invitation: www.kscopeinstitute.org/2007-05_Kaleidoscope_newsletter_final.pdf
9. **Form partnerships with other congregations that are doing work around anti-racism and multiculturalism**—both UU and non-UU. Cross-congregational relationships can be especially helpful if you're able to partner with other churches in your area or district. All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, DC, the UU Church of Silver Spring, MD, and the UU Church of Annapolis, MD, are three such churches that have regular conversations around this work.
10. Work with your district staff and your district's anti-racism team to design and create a **district-wide training, conference, workshop, or other event on anti-racism and multiculturalism.** Reach out to congregations in your area and encourage them to send teams to the meeting.

Remember, our staff team is here as a resource for you and your congregation. You can reach us at multicultural@uua.org or (617) 948-6461. We look forward to hearing from you!