

## **Introduction to Virtual Heritage Trips -- for Facilitators**

This is an introduction to virtual Unitarian Universalist heritage trips to locations other than Boston. It is meant for facilitators who will use the 90-minute curriculum, now in beta test (summer 2021), that “transports” a UU group to a particular historical moment in Tulsa, Oklahoma that offers serious questions for UUs today.

The virtual trip to Tulsa is intended for “travelers” at any age and stage, but especially for youth in a Coming of Age program. The curriculum starts with a warm-up and preparation time which readies the group for “travel.” Then, an audio/visual presentation, which the facilitator hosts using Google slides, virtually brings the group to Tulsa. Finally, the curriculum provides “the ride home” for the group to react, unpack, and consider ways to respond to the experience they’ve just had.

### **Why Take a Virtual Trip to Tulsa?**

A trip to Boston--the traditional Coming of Age heritage trip for groups that can access it—along with a tour of the UUA offices definitely can bring the traditionally taught timeline of UU history to life. However, it is not convenient or affordable for every group to visit Boston, and during the pandemic shutdown, the UUA offices were closed to visitors.

There is serendipity in this situation! Virtual heritage trips, of which the Tulsa trip is the first, remove the barrier of geographic distance to offer a carefully researched, UU-specific, guided visit to places, times, and events that are less well known yet formative of the Unitarian Universalist faith. A change in the traditional itinerary invites an explorer in search of faith heritage down lesser-known side roads into locally specific events that show different faces of the Unitarian Universalist past and invite discussion about ways to wrestle with the past and create the future we dream of. While an in-person trip might offer interaction with local UUs, the virtual trips introduce participants to local “tour guides” who share their take on UU identity, heritage, and reckoning with the past, via video.

By digging into pockets of UU history that are not often explored, and sorting out the contradictions to be found therein, it is hoped that travelers will deepen their sense of belonging and a commitment to this faith. We want to be able to embrace UUism not for its perfection but for its willingness to engage faithfully with the truth of who we have been and who we are.

With these trips, we hope to both affirm and to challenge the narrative of our faith’s history as we gain a greater understanding of the complexities of our heritage as

Unitarian Universalists. We endeavor to better understand who and how we were in the world such that we may better become who and what we want to be. We see this as a vital step in the formation of UUs of all ages, and particularly so for young UUs who are currently working toward understanding and developing their own theological beliefs as they establish their relationship with Unitarian Universalism.

There is guidance in this Introduction to help you decide to use this curriculum. Then, there is guidance for implementing the curriculum—including some very important trigger warnings--and extending the experience even after a meaningful, engaging “ride home.”

It is hoped that, after using the Tulsa curriculum, facilitators will:

- Provide feedback to the UUA Lifespan Faith Engagement office on your experience with this curriculum.
- Continue digging into UU heritage with your group, wherever you may find it. Explore Unitarian Universalism’s interactions with your own community or region’s history, closer to home.
- Keep talking with youth (or groups of any age!) about the theological and ethical questions raised by a keen look at history’s more challenging events: If I belong to a people, and that people have caused harm, how am I, and how are we, accountable?

## **History of the Virtual Heritage Trips Project**

In 1921 in Tulsa, local UU history—the founding of the city’s first Unitarian congregation—coincided with the Tulsa Race Massacre. White Tulsans, encouraged by their civic leaders, gutted the prosperous Black neighborhood of Greenwood and killed hundreds of its residents.

Fast forward, 100 years. In 2020, a group of UU religious professionals began dreaming of creating heritage trips to places outside of the traditional destination of Boston. For Coming of Age youth, a trip to the UUA headquarters in Boston has long been a culmination. It has meaning for who one is “becoming” when one joins UUism in the rite of passage of COA. There is a reason for locating UUism’s theological and historical roots in Boston. It is the nexus of the story of Unitarian Universalism that most UUs are familiar with. However, we now understand that locating UU history in Boston only provides a narrow view of UU heritage. It begs the question of what accepting a UU heritage as one’s own can mean to any UU.

As the group moved the idea forward, the pandemic occurred. Travel restrictions meant that, for the moment, virtually was the only way to visit anywhere. The group decided to “go with it!” On the positive side, the constraints of online learning and the burgeoning possibilities of technology led the group to create a model for a virtual heritage trip. The Tulsa trip is based on this model, and includes suggestions for adaptation for multi-platform and in-person gathering.

These trips can be a culminating experience in a year where actual travel is completely impossible. The virtual trip to Tulsa is designed for youth, particularly in COA programs. Meanwhile, it is hoped that this trip will invite and engage UUs of any age who wish to understand UUism in a historical context. Groups with adults and older youth are invited to take this experience deeper: What endures and what transforms as UUism matures? How does UUism as a faith equip us for accountability?

## **Deciding to Take a Virtual Trip, Not to Boston**

By traveling to Boston (and *only* to Boston) as the nexus of UU heritage, Unitarian Universalists make a statement as to how they understand the faith they belong to. If you are guiding others to enter this faith as they enter adulthood, you are making a statement, or, establishing a norm, for them. To choose a virtual heritage trip to Tulsa (or another location with a challenging UU story) instead of focusing on Boston makes a different statement, and lifts up a question: What is our heritage as UUs?

By opening up the question of “what is our heritage?” we agree to move away from the agreed-upon, mostly positive story of UUism’s history that a trip to Boston affirms. The path is unpaved, our minds are open, and difficult stories are going to come up. The Tulsa virtual trip introduces a particularly difficult one.

Some issues to consider around taking a group on a virtual trip to Tulsa are the same as they would be for actual travel. Please give thought to the following:

### ***How well bonded/covenanted is the group, with each other and with their adult facilitator(s)?***

This trip assumes some level of bonding and comfort with each other beforehand in order for participants to really engage in the discussions. It also assumes that the group has some sort of covenant or meeting norms and other ways to be accountable to each other that can be brought into play during the trip. This content can be challenging.

Racial violence, which is inherently traumatizing, is central to the story this trip illuminates. Facilitators should be mindful of their group’s dynamics and ensure their youth’s safety while engaging with this hard moment in history. Youth should be

encouraged to lean into their discomfort. This is how we grow. But they should never feel unsafe or harmed by what is happening.

A group of participants who are new to one another and lack an explicit covenant should not do this curriculum!

A group that includes youth who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) should only consider this trip if participants have access to a BIPOC cohort or mentor for additional processing, should they desire it.

***What accommodations do any individuals in the group need to be fully, meaningfully included in all aspects of the trip?***

Presumably by this point in the pandemic you have already found ways to make accommodations for your youth, as needed, so that all can participate in your group virtually. Please continue to be mindful of what your group and individual participants may need in order to best participate in a virtual trip, as well. The curriculum for the virtual trip to Tulsa offers some adaptation guidance.

The group may have individuals who would be challenged by physical travel and possibly unable to participate, but who can participate fully in a virtual experience. For these participants, choosing this virtual trip for the group to share together *is* the accommodation.

***What terms and understandings are shared already by your whole group? What may need to be introduced beforehand?***

The virtual trip assumes that participants identify as UU and/or have participated in some form of UU religious education, with at least some knowledge of Unitarian Universalism and its history: Our Principles, our commitment to social justice, our theology that considers personal faith a journey rather than a creed, our cultural roots in white Protestantism. For this trip, here are some terms and concepts for which participants' common understanding will be helpful:

- Covenant
- White Supremacy
- Systemic Racism
- Anti-Oppression
- Multiculturalism
- Liberal theology
- Reparations
- Black Lives Matter

## **Deep Questions and Important Guidelines**

Before your trip begins, you will want to spend some time in reflection to prepare for the deep questions we hope will arise for you and your participants. First, consider these questions for yourself. Then, use these guidelines to create a dynamic, brave space for participants to engage with these questions.

### **Unitarian Universalist Identity**

As with traditional Coming of Age heritage trips, we hope that you, along with your participants, will use virtual, not-to-Boston heritage trips to deepen your connection to Unitarian Universalism. As you prepare yourself and your students for the virtual journey to Tulsa, please consider:

- How do you bring your own theological beliefs—your own beliefs about what is important in the world and how the world works— to this program?
- How do you bring your understanding of our UU Principles to this program? What are your experiences and thoughts related to living UU Principles, and how do you bring these into the work you do with UU youth?
- What is your commitment to Unitarian Universalism? To what extent do you “belong” to UUism and UU communities? What if anything has been problematic for you in “belonging,” and how have you dealt with any disconnects or harms, and in what positive, useful ways can you bring your own experiences into this work with youth?
- What is your commitment to your local community and place, and what is UU about how you express it?

Questions hold a fundamental place in our faith. These heritage trips, like the Coming of Age program as a whole, invite you to model curiosity and exploration as integral pieces of our continued, lifelong learning and growth. Just as we grow and develop as individuals, we grow and develop in our community of faith. These trips engage you and the group in that growth and development.

### **Engaging Our Heritage**

We hope these trips will encourage you, along with your group, to appreciate as well as wrestle with new-to-you aspects of our rich Unitarian Universalist heritage. We encourage you to embrace the spirit of Sankofa. Sankofa is a principle from the Akan people of Ghana, which is often translated as: Go back and fetch it. It reminds us of the importance of looking back to our past in order to find what we need to flourish in the present and the future. With these heritage trips, we hope to go back to our Unitarian and Universalist past and retrieve what is useful for our flourishing and wholeness in the future. We know that this past is not always positive. Sometimes, it can be embarrassing, or can cause shame or anger. Still, by interrogating our past, and not

hiding from it, we can move forward in ways that align with our values and our commitments to this faith.

Disrupting the idea that a heritage trip must be to Boston is also intended to inspire local groups to begin their own explorations. Unitarians and Universalists lived and practiced this faith in communities all over the U.S. and in Canada, but neither Unitarianism nor Universalism was a monolithic faith. Each heritage trip can uncover new information about UU practice and experience in different contexts. What is recognizable about the way these Unitarians, or those Universalists, behaved in their era? What raises questions? Similarly, Unitarian and Universalist communities have never been completely homogenous. These heritage trips are a way for us to uncover the diversity among Unitarian and Universalist people over time and place.

What and where can UU heritage be found where you live, in your local community, state, or region? What are the layers to a UU identity where you live? What are the questions for UUs in your location today? You may wish to engage with these wonderings before the trip. What you learn can shape a meaningful extension activity for the group afterward.

### **Being Good Guests**

As you take these journeys—even though they're virtual—we hope you will consider what it means to be a good guest in someone else's community. For example, when we are guests in someone else's home, we bring a spirit of humility, curiosity, and gratitude.

With the Tulsa virtual trip as a prototype, the UUA hopes to develop virtual trips to various locations. The creators of this curriculum commit to the practice of including as partners and "tour guides" local UUs who are, or are in accountable relationships with, people directly impacted by racism and other oppressions past and/or present.

*Note:* "UU" and "directly impacted" are not mutually exclusive! It is important to recognize that people with marginalized identities have always been in and around UU communities. We hope that these heritage trips support you to cultivate respectful and accountable community relationships in your own home context as well as appreciate the diverse identities, stories, and experiences within your own UU faith community.

### **Avoiding Harm**

These past few years have seen a rise in conversations in our faith and in society at large about marginalized identities and systemic oppression. The White Supremacy Teach-In (2017) led by UU religious educators encouraged/challenged us to examine ways that systems of dominance and supremacy are embedded in the structure of our

faith. In order to be a source of love, justice, and liberation in the world, we need to come to terms with those impediments that have been—and may continue to be—obstacles to love, justice and liberation in our own metaphorical walls. As we work within our UU communities to journey to wholeness and to dismantle systemic racism, we have seen these conversations intensify as the nation has paid more attention to the killings of Black people by the police, a racist incarceration system, continued hostility directed toward immigrants of color, and increased scapegoating of Asian Americans. Conversations about race and racism are essential and we welcome the change and growth that they will usher in. However, we also recognize the extent to which these conversations, in their persistence and intensity, can be particular sources of trauma for people of color.

Racial Trauma is emotional or psychological distress as a response to experiencing or witnessing racism or racial violence. While it is necessary and important that we confront a history of racism and white supremacy, as the Tulsa virtual trip guides us to do, it is also true that confronting these issues can contribute to racial trauma for our youth, particularly our BIPOC youth. Reviewing images, videos, and narratives that show and retell stories of racial violence can trigger racial trauma. In engaging this material, we cannot stress enough that the safety and care of everyone in the group depends on the facilitator's commitment to covenanted expectations participants are already familiar with.

We encourage you, as leaders, to:

- **Prepare with ARAOMC\* work.** We recommend that you do not attempt this curriculum if your group has not already done some work together on understanding systems of oppression. The group (and adult facilitators) will need this groundwork to understand the Tulsa Race Massacre and Unitarians' role in it as something greater than incidental—something systemic in American society, if not also in our faith. Below, find some antiracism learning resources to explore for your own preparation and to share with youth.  
\*Anti-racism, Anti-oppression, Multiculturalism
- **Resist the instinct to defensiveness.** Instead, be curious about your own responses. Use curiosity to help participants explore theirs.
- **Provide extra pastoral care for BIPOC participants.** We encourage you to provide pastoral care for all participants. Talking about race and racism can cause feelings of pain and confusion for everyone. For BIPOC participants, these conversations can be particularly emotionally exhausting, leading to feelings of

depression and/or anger. Check in with your participants one-on-one and make pastoral care a part of your program.

- **Provide opportunities for Racial Caucusing.** Caucusing is an opportunity for groups that share an identity (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) to meet together. Caucusing allows people an opportunity to share feelings and questions that they may not feel comfortable sharing in a larger, more diverse group or that may not be appropriate for the larger group.

Race-based caucusing can be a challenge in communities with very few people of color. Find ways to make it happen for your youth. Some ways to ensure racial caucusing opportunities are (1) expanding your group, (2) identifying adult or young adult mentors of color who have capacity to join your leadership team, and (3) reaching out to Sara Green, Youth and Young Adults Program Manager in the UUA's Lifespan Faith Engagement office, whose role includes programming, connection, and support for BIPOC youth. If you cannot provide an opportunity for students of color to participate in caucus conversations, reconsider the appropriateness of this trip for your group.

## **Planning and Implementation**

It is recommended to provide a pre-trip meeting for youth, or for youth and parents/caregivers. Including parents/caregivers extends the concept of UU heritage existing outside of Boston to a wider audience! In addition to conveying the logistics and preparation points mentioned below, you can use a pre-trip meeting to highlight the concept of "Unitarian Universalist heritage" and thereby deepen participant connections to the experience. Whether your meeting includes families or only the youth, you might offer breakout rooms for small groups to discuss what "heritage" means to them and reflect on the multiple identities and heritages each one of us may carry.

With or without a preparatory meeting, plan to provide a written communication. In addition to date, time, and Zoom links for youth (see below) make sure you communicate to families these points:

- **Preface the general idea/concept of going on a virtual heritage trip together, not to Boston.**
  - Explain why you decided to take the group on this "trip" and how it otherwise fits into your group's programming for the year. Use the language from this Introduction that most spoke to you in order to genuinely share your hopes for going on this journey together.



- Depending on whether or not your congregation’s youth have traditionally gone to Boston in the past, you may wish to explain ways this trip will be like and unlike that kind of “heritage trip.” This gives you an opportunity to propose a broader understanding of “UU heritage.”
- **Describe what will happen while youth are on this trip.**
  - Include the basic format (90 minutes on Zoom) plus the need for a coffee-scented item (unless this is supposed to be a surprise!) and the expectation of being good guests, open-minded travelers, and good traveling companions. You can also share that there will be interactive games, including a break for snacks.
  - If you plan to include the “snack challenge,” you may wish to warn parents that youth will be quickly raiding their kitchen during this part.
- **Emphasize that the group’s existing covenants apply when “traveling” together.**
  - You might include the written covenant (or meeting norms) the group has made.
  - Mention that the trip will discuss racial violence and make these points: Sometimes we have to look at ugliness to learn and grow. Racial violence is an inherently traumatizing topic. On this trip, we will want to take good care of ourselves and look out for one another. Our covenant will support us to do that.

### **Logistics to Share in Advance with Youth**

Let youth know they’ll be expected to...

- Bring paper and something to write with.
- Bring coffee-scented item (could include an actual cup of coffee; should be offered optionally to accommodate anyone with sensory or other restrictions; for example, someone might bring only the cup). Facilitators may also wish to somehow get these items to their participants beforehand.
- Log in on time (e.g., have the Zoom link).

Encourage youth, if possible, to join from a laptop or other device with a larger screen. It will be difficult to view everything properly on a phone.

If you will invite youth to comment in the Chat or on a Jamboard, give them a heads up as to how you will want these tools used during the “trip.”

If you will use this curriculum over multiple sessions, we recommend establishing the following “youth leadership roles” that can be chosen in advance for all the sessions (or

on the spot for some of them, depending on how big the group is and how it typically functions). Ideally you will have two or more youth ready, per role, over the sessions of this trip.

- The Vibe Setter. This person has a playlist of songs ready to share on Zoom for the start of meetings as youth are trickling in, during breaks, etc. This person also has the power to yell DANCE BREAK if they feel the vibe is getting too sleepy, and everyone has to pause, jump up as they are able, and bust a move real fast, before resuming.
- The Fire Person. This person is always prepared with a nearby chalice and flame and is willing to read the chalice lighting words while others get theirs ready (if you have a particularly Rockstar UU Youth in this role, you could also ask them to bring their own reading, too!)
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Reader. This person is always willing to start when volunteers will take turns reading aloud (then popcorn-pass-it-along to someone else!)
- The Tech Wizard. This person is your go-to if things go awry on Zoom. Possibly also given the links for sharing videos, etc. at the start, too.

## **Guidance for Facilitating the Trip's Three Segments**

The trip to Tulsa includes three half-hour sessions, designed for a single, 90-minute meeting over Zoom. Part 1 is getting ready to go. Part 2 is a Google slide presentation, the actual trip. Part 3 is the ride home and an invitation to “unpack.” The guidance below is based on this single, virtual meeting. Breaks are indicated in the program, and are encouraged between the half-hour segments.

However, many variations are possible, especially for groups who are able to meet in person! You can use one meeting for the “getting ready” activities and the virtual trip, and a second meeting to process the trip. This can allow a group, at the second meeting, to go deeper and move from reflection and response into extension activities [[link to extension activity page](#)] and follow-up actions.

The curriculum document offers adaptations for in-person groups to do outdoors (with Internet access, large monitor, and speakers!) and socially-distanced. There are also adaptations for multi-platform groups meeting in-person and online; however, this is inherently more challenging and will require multiple facilitators. Adaptations will still use a slide presentation with embedded video clips for the “trip” and will therefore require the right equipment set up and tested on-site, in advance.

### **Preparation Before Facilitating the Curriculum**

Read through the entire curriculum beforehand. Pay special attention to the “Speaker Notes” for each slide in the middle section (the trip). Throughout, make sure you

understand the directions to you and the directions you will give the youth. Leave yourself time to prepare and practice delivering scripted material in your own voice. For multiple facilitators, go through the curriculum together and divvy up who does what. Decide who will serve as timekeeper. It will be important to move along through the curriculum without detours; keep a “parking lot” for topics to pick up during “The Ride Home” or at a later group gathering.

Consider printing a copy of the curriculum to keep on-hand while you facilitate. For the slide presentation, you will need to use, but not display, the Speaker Notes. You can make a printout of the slides beforehand, with Speaker Notes (be sure to go to Printer Settings first to include notes) OR you can share the slides and not display the Speaker Notes by choosing “Presenter View.” For detailed information about how to do this on Zoom, see [this YouTube video](#):

It is recommended that you practice the above beforehand, as it can be a bit challenging to present Google slideshows in Zoom, while viewing the Speaker Notes and also viewing participants. Likewise, practice playing the video clips that are embedded in the presentation and being sure you are “sharing audio.” Seek help from someone or find a YouTube tutorial for anything you find difficult). It takes patience and practice but we promise it can be done!

Practice and plan how to read/present various parts, for example, the introduction to the journey. These pieces were written using the author’s “voice” and may be adapted to fit the facilitator’s own voice/style, or however the facilitator prefers, as long as you get the content across!

Prepare a document (in addition to the curriculum document) that you can leave open on your screen while leading the trip. It should include your “Link List” and “Things to Put in Chat,” both of which you will find in the curriculum.

Chose an opening song (and a way to play it) beforehand. Play a song from one of the following playlists that UU religious educators curated for COAers, choose your own, or invite the youth in advance to make a suggestion. Have a designated vibe setter (see “youth leadership roles” below) or invite one of the first youth who arrive to put something on!

- ["UU Passages"](#) curated on Spotify by UU religious educator Lauren Wyeth
- ["Coming of Age"](#) curated on Spotify by UU religious educator Dayna Edwards

You may wish to decide beforehand what the group will do during breaks. Consider the time of day you’re meeting, group norms, accessibility, etc. Snack Scrambles are great

for groups meeting virtually in the afternoon or evening (no one likes a hangry teenager!) but less so for morning groups, and may not be accessible to everyone in your group.

If you plan to use the Social Justice Stretch, practice leading it beforehand. The stretch should be led by a facilitator, while participants follow along. The facilitator reads each part out loud while reaching up/down with their hands, using them to sway, and then using their feet to stomp. You repeat all of these motions 3 times, getting faster each time. At the very end, you also say “stomp out injustice” 3 times for emphasis!

### **Tips for Facilitating This Curriculum**

Facilitators should be ready to open and host the Zoom meeting space for the group. Plan to open the room a little early so you will have time to fully set up for the session including to test your connection to the Google slides and your ability to share screen to present the “trip.” You will want to have at-hand all of the materials listed in the curriculum, including the same sensory item the youth are asked to have. For the Tulsa trip, this is something that smells like coffee or an item symbolic of this; be prepared to lift up your item and encourage others to do so when the coffee icon comes up during the Trip.

Groups should use their own pre-established norms for being on Zoom together. Facilitators should be familiar with what those are, know what the group will need to do if norms/covenant are broken, and keep a written covenant at-hand. It is suggested that facilitators review the covenant guidelines or norms with the group before the “trip” begins.

Facilitators should use their printed curriculum (or the Word document open on their desktop) to lead, through most of the curriculum. Plan to shift to the “Speaker Notes” as your guide during the Google Slides portion of the “trip.” The Speaker Notes on the last slide remind you to return to the curriculum for the post-trip “Ride Home.”

Facilitators are encouraged to add their own voice/style to the scripted material, while providing as much of the content as possible as it’s written. It is especially important during the slide presentation to present all of the content as words have been chosen very deliberately and trauma warnings (e.g., “harm alerts”) have been carefully placed.

Remember to keep track of time. During the slide presentation, you may wish to start a “parking lot” to make sure you can pursue all the contributions youth may make briefly as they react to the slides and video. Likewise, we recommend saving the Zoom chat

afterwards, to see and keep a record of questions and thoughts for the group to revisit at a subsequent gathering.

Don't forget to "share computer sound" when you screenshare the Google slides!

### **Follow-up and Extension Activities**

The curriculum guides you, during "The Ride Home," to gauge youth enthusiasm for extension activities. Depending on your plans and local resources you are aware of, you might float the idea of "taking it home" via a dive into local or regional UU history and/or Unitarian or Universalist entanglement with historic local or national events. Perhaps the group could create their own heritage tour (virtual or involving in-person visits to local or regional sites, perhaps even an exploration of your congregation's building/grounds) Guidance for potential extension activities, including local exploration, [can be found here](#). Please review these and give some thought to what you'll offer the group before your trip!

You are also encouraged to share resources for youth and their families to learn more about the Tulsa Massacre, Unitarianism in regional settings, antiracism activism, and other topics introduced during this trip. The extension activities document offers some of these.

### **ARAOMC Preparation for Virtual Trip Facilitators**

There is no "crash course" and antiracism/anti-oppression learning and work are lifelong practices. That said, to offer this virtual trip to youth, facilitators should have:

- familiarity with issues of systemic oppression
- some comfort leading youth to explore these issues, including with a group that may include both white and BIPOC youth
- knowledge of how to resource themselves, the group, and particularly individuals who are BIPOC for affinity, support, or pastoral needs that may arise in the course of this "trip."

Here are some resources to help you, the facilitator, prepare. It is recommended that you incorporate the learnings and practices offered here into your work with youth during and beyond this virtual trip.

If ideas for liberative pedagogy or more practice with social justice and antiracism material is what you/your group needs, check out [Learning for Justice](#) (formerly Teaching Tolerance). They have been compiling curriculum and teaching strategies for

decades. Although theirs is secular material, their reflection questions tend to be faithful to our Principles.

Two study guides from the UU College of Social Justice team zero in on interacting with new people and new places with integrity and respect. They are written for youth travel programs that are a little different from the UU Heritage Trips, but either can be an excellent intro for your group embarking on this trip:

- [Activate Tucson Youth Study Guide: Immigration Justice](#)
- [Activate West Virginia Youth Study Guide: Appalachia in Transition](#)

During the Tulsa virtual trip, the group will watch a video in two parts because the trip planners (the curriculum developers), in order to reduce harm, decided to skip a moment when a reporter, quoting a historical subject, utters a racial slur. This reasoning is explained when the pause occurs. If youth want to further pursue the topic of racial slur words and harm, take great care. Unlike many topics we wish youth to explore in a COA group, this is one where youth trying out opinions out loud can harshly impact someone in the group. It can easily happen that a discussion gets away from you and in itself causes harm. You might touch the topic in a structured way by inviting participants to share one at a time in response to these questions: “What is your relationship with racial slurs? Are they part of your usual speech? When, where, why would you say it? In what contexts do you hear it?” Encourage youth to use “I” statements. Make sure the point is made, by participants or by you, that racial slurs have ugly history and have great power to harm.

Here are two articles by educators that can orient you:

- [“Teaching the N-Word.”](#) In this article from [rethinkingschools.org](http://rethinkingschools.org), white high school teacher Michelle Kenney describes a lesson to engage a racially diverse class to consider the impact of the word, while preparing the class to study the play, “Fences.”
- [“It’s Time to Completely Ban the N-Word in Schools.”](#) Black professor and director of the Pritzker Center for Strengthening Children and Families at UCLA Tyrone C. Howard writes in EdWeek making a case for zero tolerance of the word.

Finally, for support in preparing to lead hard conversations and in planning for care of all participants, especially BIPOC youth, reach out to Sara Green, Youth and Young Adults of Color Ministry Manager in the UUA’s Lifespan Faith Engagement Office ([sgreen@uua.org](mailto:sgreen@uua.org)). She is deeply familiar with the virtual heritage project’s content and intentions and can offer wisdom and connections.