

## **Creating Multicultural Community** **An activity created for LREDA Fall Con 2008** **By Laura Spencer**

Any community is by its very nature a multicultural community. Every person is a distinct individual with individual needs and gifts. As we increase the diversity of a group, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability status, economic status, etc., we increase the complexity of the group. To create a culture of the community that welcomes and affirms the breadth of this cultural diversity is the goal of creating a Multicultural Community.

The following activity is a way to explore the groups you work in and to help create an environment that is multicultural. This can be done as a teaching exercise with a group as an example of how to create multicultural community or can be done with an existing or newly forming group or committee as a way of helping it become a multicultural community.

Who are you?

- Spend a few minutes (5-10) to allow each person to reflect on who they are as individuals. Share the following instructions:
  - Start by writing your name in the center of the paper and draw a circle around it.
  - Then Begin creating spokes and off shoots and sub off shoots listing what describes who you are.
  - Then when the inspiration comes begin creating some sort of representation of who you are,
    - ◆ It could be a drawing or sketch,
    - ◆ It could be a written words
    - ◆ It could be musical notes
    - ◆ It could even be movement.
  - Strive to capture the essence of who you are.
    - ◆ What is your fundamental nature?
    - ◆ What is your outlook on life?
    - ◆ What are your natural talents and gifts?
    - ◆ How do you usually interact with others?
    - ◆ What are your dreams?
    - ◆ What are your needs from others?
    - ◆ What are your identities, gender, race, orientation, abilities status, etc.?
    - ◆ What experiences from your life shape your outlook?
    - ◆ What stage in life are you in? (active parenting, senior, student, etc.)
  - If this is an new or existing group consider:
    - ◆ What is your role in this group?
    - ◆ Why are you a part of this group?
  - You can play meditative music during this process or do it in silence. I like "Tell me Your Name" By Carolyn McDade from the CD We Are The Land We Sing 1999

Who are we?

- In a group of 4, (or the whole group if this is a committee or team), take turns sharing your representations. Introduce this self to the others in your group. As you listen to others pay attention to ways that your fundamental nature is supported by or is challenged by the natures of others. Note these down.
- Share with each other your observations about how your identities support or challenge each other.

### Creating Sacred Community

- Spend a few minutes to discuss and jot down on the Multi-Cultural Community Sheet (see handout page) what it is that the four of you (or your group or committee) need to be able to create sacred community.
- Each small circle represents one member of the community. Add more circles if needed. The large circle is the Sacred Community you are striving to create.
- For a larger group you might use chart paper or white board instead of the handout.
- Sacred Community is one where each person is able to participate fully and to bring their full selves into the community. It embodies and lives out our UU principles.
  - What is it you each need from others in the group (For example if you are shy what do you need to be able to feel comfortable to share, If you have a hearing loss what do you need?)
  - What it is that you might need to give or give up in order to make room for others to be able to be in community. (If you are usually talkative how can you make space for the shy ones. As a speaker how can you be sure everyone can hear you?)
  - What way will decisions be made that insures all of you are included and represented?
  - It is important that everyone be willing to risk asking for what they need.
  - Keep in mind the ways your identities may have historically and systematically given you an advantage over others in the group and how you might need to give back some of that advantage.
  - Keep in mind ways you may have been marginalized and what you need from others to be able to be fully yourself in the group.
  - For existing or forming groups how do you need to structure your future meetings to fit all needs? (For example: time and place of meetings.)

### Sharing the Learning

- If you have divided into small groups allow time for small groups to share with whole group their group's sacred community either verbally or by posting your worksheets on the wall.

### Taking it further

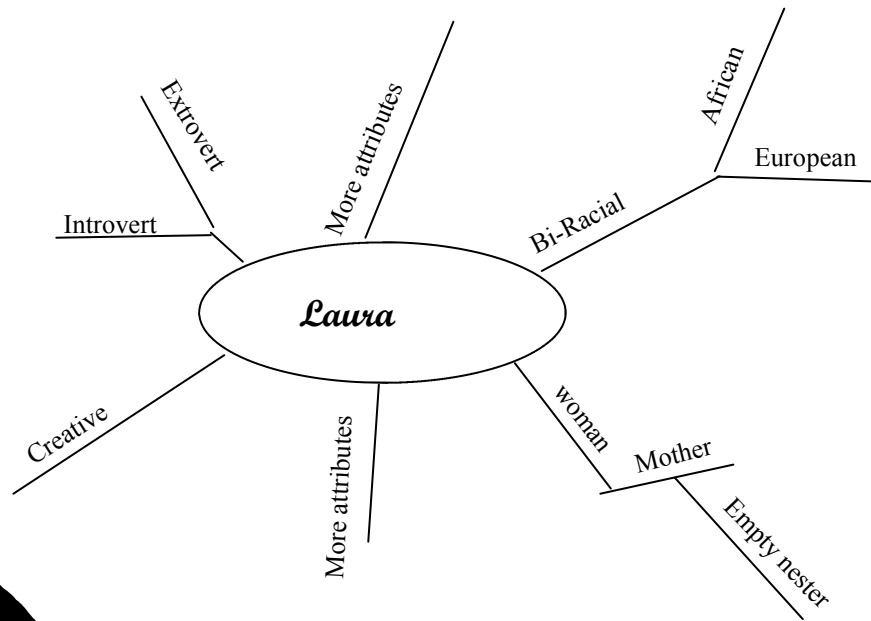
- As an additional activity you might try creating your own seven principles that relates to your group. Take each principle and apply it to your group. For example:
  - The inherent worth and dignity of every person; *Each member of this group is important.*
  - Justice, equity and compassion in human relations; *We will operate in a way that allows all to participate fully.*
  - Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations; *We recognize that we all bring unique perspective and strive to make space for differences.*
  - A free and responsible search for truth and meaning; *We will keep our hearts and minds and ears open to learning about each other, our unique community here and how to best do our work.*
  - The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; *We will use decision making processes that allow all members needs to be accounted for.*
  - The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; *We will strive to take what we have learned about sacred community out into the wider community in which we live and work.*
  - Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. *We will recognize the impact of systemized privilege and oppression has on our community and we will strive to create a more equitable system for our work.*

# Tell Me Your Name, The One You Call Yourself.

It cant be given, only claimed. It cant be stolen or bartered away.

Carolyn McDade, from We Are the Land We Sing 1999

## Example



I am a Ying/Yang kind of person I have many characteristics that are opposite of each other. Both sides need to be accounted for and need to be nurtured. I am a introvert that loves interacting with people. I am task oriented but get distracted. .... more description .....

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