Ministry with Transracially Adopted Youth

UUA - Ministries and Faith Development: Youth and Young Adult Ministries and Resource Development Offices
Ministry with Transracially Adopted Youth

• Welcome

• Introductions
Ministry with Transracially Adopted Youth

• Objectives:
  - Learn the fundamentals of ministry with transracially adopted youth.
  - Articulate and process any comfort discussing ethnic/racial identity development.
  - Learn about and share resources.
Questions to Process

• Why is it important for faith leaders to learn about the ministry needs of transracially adopted children and youth?
Questions to Process

- Are you comfortable taking about your race/ethnicity?
- Are you comfortable talking to other people about their race/ethnicity?
- Have you engaged in racial/ethnic identity work?
Questions to Process

• What assumptions do you live with concerning adoption?
  - What are your feelings related to adoption?
Questions to Process

• What assumptions do you live with concerning transracial adoption?
  – What are your feelings related to transracial and transnational adoption?
Questions to Process

• What tells you a child or youth of color is adopted?
  - What assumptions are you making?
• Is it possible the child or youth is biracial?
  - What feelings does that bring up for you?
Questions to Process

• What is your relationship with the child or youth?
  - It is important to form a trusting relationship and safe space for the child or youth to communicate before there is a crisis.
Challenges

- **What is your relationship with their parent/s/guardian?**
  - Are the parents/guardians open to talking about race/ethnicity?
  - Unless you have talked with parent/guardians do not assume they are open to dialogue and or programming.
Challenges

- Remember this process is not about you.
- No one program or experience is enough.
  - culture camp
  - one RE class related to identity
- Understanding that issues related to normal stages of development and issues related to adoption can manifest similarly and may be tangled together.
Ministry in Action

- Provide identity development education across generations
- Create a safe environment where youth feel comfortable talking about their identity.
- Do not assume all transracially adopted youth have the same experience.
Helpful Tips for Parents

(1) encourage children to acknowledge and discuss their racial heritage with you as well as other significant individuals;
(2) acknowledge that their child’s racial/ethnic heritage is different from their own and recognize that as a positive;
(3) give their child opportunities to develop relationships with peers from many different backgrounds by allowing them to attend integrated schools and by living in integrated neighborhoods;
(4) allow their child to meet role models through participation in social activities held by support groups…
(5) Form a family identity as an interracial unit.[1]

Helpful Tips for Religious Leaders

• Identify organizations in your area that are involved in transracial/transnational adoption.
  – Host speakers, panel discussions and other education events.
• Help to organize a parent support group.
• Help to organize events for children and youth.
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- Questions

- Resource Sharing
**Resources**

- **Mosaic Project** – The 2009 Mosaic Project Report assessed and made recommendations for meeting the needs of UU youth and young adults of color.
- **Weaving a Family: Untangling Race and Adoption** – (book) Barbara Katz Rothman looks at the contemporary American family through the lens of race, race through the lens of adoption, and all-race, family, and adoption-within the context of the changing meanings of motherhood.
- UUA Multiculturalism resources [webpage](http://www.uua.org)
- **The Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child** (book) Nancy Newton Verrier
- Rev. Dr. Monica L. Cummings, Ministry with Youth and Young Adults of Color, mcummings@uua.org
Resources

• UUA Identity-Based Workshops for Youth – each with animated video and guidance for follow-up discussion
• Intro to Ethnic Identity for Youth of Color
• Intro to White Identity for Youth
• “Off and Running” – PBS POV film. Description, guidance for screening the film, and lesson plans:
  http://www.pbs.org/pov/offandrunning/lesson_plan.php