

**BUILDING THE WORLD WE DREAM ABOUT:  
FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

**A Tapestry of Faith Program for Adults**

**Young Adults, 18-35**



**BY MARK HICKS**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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"It feels like We are eyeing one another across a great divide," is used with the permission of Rev. Alicia Forde.

Cummings' Identity Map was originally published in the 2008 dissertation "An Educational Model of Pastoral Care to Support Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Unitarian Universalist Congregations" by Rev. Dr. Monica Cummings. It was adapted from P. A. Hays, "Addressing the Complexities of Culture and Gender in Counseling," in *Journal of Counseling and Development* 74 (March/April 1996), 332-38; copyright American Counseling Association.

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## THE PROGRAM

*We need a place to dream together, to get into what has been kept unknown. Dreaming means flowing with the unknown river of community. — Arnold Mindell, American physicist, psychotherapist, writer, and founder of Process Oriented Psychology*

Scientists have confirmed what progressive theologians and philosophers have known for years: "Race" is a product of the human imagination, not biological science. At the same time, however, we know that while any theory of race is a social construction, individuals and groups around the world feel the experience of racism harshly. Racism informs our psychological state, our personality, the institutional and social values that shape our working lives, our ways of interpreting the world, and even the values we place on human life.

Three years ago, the UUA published *Building the World We Dream About*, an adult program that seeks to interrupt the workings of racism and transform how people from different racial/ethnic groups understand and relate to one another in the congregation and in the communities of which the congregation is a part.

This new version of the program, *Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults*, is specifically tailored to the experiences of young adults whose life situations and congregational involvement are somewhat fluid. The program, comprised of eight two-hour workshops adaptable to a variety of formats and settings, is largely derived from the materials, activities, process, and vision of the original program. It focuses on enhancing personal multicultural competency and the ability to navigate a multicultural world. This version does not assume that participants are part of the same congregation, or indeed, any congregation. Some groups may form specifically for the purpose of experiencing this program and may include participants from a number of different Unitarian Universalists contexts.

In addition, this version takes into account the generational experiences of young adults, both cultural and technological, and includes new material which represents the voices and experiences of young adult Unitarian Universalists. It recognizes that although young adults generally have more familiarity with the idea of a multicultural world than do those of older generations, they bring vastly different levels of multicultural competency and some may bring less experience and more wariness about cross-racial and cross-cultural conversation than might be assumed. *Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults* offers a process by which young adults can engage in honest and open conversations about race, better understand their own ethnic and racial identity and journey, and learn the practical skills they need to in

their own lives *right now* as they make their way in an increasingly multicultural world. The program creates opportunities for participants to practice dreaming our world otherwise, and then commit to new ways of being in the world in.

As Unitarian Universalists, we hope developing antiracist, antioppressive, and multicultural habits and skills will lead us to build the multicultural world of beloved community we dream about. However, open and honest conversation about race and oppression is one of the most challenging and potentially divisive experiences individuals and congregations can undertake. Even when people believe they are willing to discuss racial issues, they often harbor unstated fears about what such a conversation will bring to the surface. And with good reason. Discussions about race often reveal the existence of systemic inequalities and injustice. For people socialized into a White ethnic/racial identity, the resulting feelings of guilt and hopelessness can become overwhelming. For People of Color and other people marginalized by race and ethnicity, race talk raises unpleasant and painful memories.

But as Unitarian Universalist people of faith, we must talk about race, even when it disturbs us to do so. As the poet Seneca once said, "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult." Indeed, our spiritual health and moral integrity demand that we dare to confront racism and oppression in our congregations, our faith community, and the larger world. And we must begin with honest conversation.

*Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults* extends the promise of Unitarian Universalism by creating means, structures, and spaces through which every participant—whether their experiences have been of empowerment or disenfranchisement—can find a place and work with others to acquire and deepen multicultural competence and transform understandings of self, the broader community, and our shared world.

In order to grasp of the approach and intent of *Building the World We Dream About*, think of yourself and workshop participants as photographers working with a telescopic lens. At times you will be asked to bring yourself and your own identity and personal history into sharp focus, paying particular attention to the impact of your lived experiences on the way you see and make sense of yourself and the world. Sometimes you will focus on yourself as part of groups that have their own identity and practices. Sometimes your focus will be on the broader society, and the ways you and groups with which you identify interact within it. This program asks you to bring the context of your life—the part of the image that typically stays blurry—into full view and focus. The focus on both the personal and the social contexts in the safe space of this program creates a rare opportunity to come into to confront ill-formed

assumption and find new ways to undo racism. As cultural critic James Baldwin said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."

## GOALS

This program will:

- Provide participants with a better understanding of people who are different from them
- Deepen participants' ability to communicate openly and clearly with those in their circle of friends and acquaintances
- Present the idea that racism is a social construct which can be deconstructed
- Explore Whiteness and how it is viewed by people of different racial and ethnic identities
- Offer an opportunity to name, heal, and reconcile past and current racial wounds
- Identify ways to build multiracial/multicultural communities of love and justice
- Present Unitarian Universalist theology, tradition, and Principles as a basis for antiracism, antioppression, and multicultural work.

## LEADERS

This program should be facilitated by a team of at least two young adult people. The team should include either a religious professional or lay person who has significant facilitation experience and personal experience in talking about race and ethnicity. Because this is a program requires significant preparation and planning time, facilitators must understand the commitment they are making.

Effective facilitators will have these strengths:

- Experience facilitating a group process
- Experience engaging in multicultural dialogue
- Ability to create and nurture a supportive, respectful, and safe community in the workshops and follow all congregational safe congregation guidelines and policies
- Time and willingness to prepare thoroughly
- Willingness to listen deeply and let "answers" emerge from the group process
- Integrity and the ability to maintain strong boundaries, especially in challenging conversations

- Commitment to Unitarian Universalist Principles and the faith development components of this program
- Respect for individuals regardless of age, race/ethnicity, social class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability, and a willingness to modify workshop plans to support the full inclusion of all participants
- Willingness to support healthy group process by reinforcing ground rules politely and confidently
- Ability to model respect for the congregation, district, or other sponsoring organization and its lay and professional leadership.

## PARTICIPANTS

The program is designed for young adult participants ages 18 to 35 who seek challenging faith development. The ideal group size is 12 to 24 participants, although the program is suitable for groups as small as eight and as large as 30. Participants will be invited to bring their own stories to the group and to share some of their own experiences in both small and large groups.

## INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

People of all ages have a range of abilities, disabilities, and sensitivities. Be sure to ask individual participants to identify disability- or sensitivity-related accommodations they need. Include a question about disabilities and other special needs on registration forms or sign-up sheets. Some activities include specific suggestions for adaptation. In all cases, keep in mind these guidelines:

- Make a few large-print copies of all handouts.
- Write clearly and use large letters on newsprint. Use black or brown markers for maximum visibility (red and green are difficult for some to see).
- Make a handout of prepared newsprint pages to give to any who request it.
- Face the group when you speak and urge others to do the same. Be aware of facial hair or hand gestures that can prevent or interfere with lip-reading.
- In a large space or with a large group of people, use a microphone for presentations and for questions and answers. If an activity prevents speakers from facing listeners (e.g., a fishbowl activity, forced choice activity, or role play), pass a hand microphone from speaker to speaker.
- When leading a brainstorm activity, repeat clearly any word or phrase generated by the group, as you write it on newsprint.

- During small group work, make sure each group is far enough from other groups to minimize noise interference.
- Keep aisles and doorways clear at all times during a workshop so people with mobility impairments or immediate needs can exit the room easily.
- When rearranging furniture for small groups or other purposes, leave clear pathways between groups.
- Emphasize the importance of removing bags, books, coffee cups, and other obstacles left in pathways.
- Use the phrase "Rise in body or spirit," rather than "Please stand."
- Use language that puts the person first, rather than the disability—that is, "a person who uses a wheelchair," rather than "a wheelchair-user"; "a person with dyslexia," rather than "a dyslexic person"; "people with disabilities," rather than "the disabled."
- Refrain from asking individuals to read aloud. Do not go around the room expecting each person to read a part of something. Request a volunteer or read the material yourself.
- Ask participants to let you know in advance of any allergies to foods. Add to your covenant an agreement that the group will avoid bringing problem foods for snacks or will always offer an alternative snack food.
- Ask participants to let you know in advance of any allergies to scents or perfumes. If any participants have allergies or sensitivities, invite members of the group to refrain from wearing perfumes and add this agreement to your covenant.

Consult the [Disability and Accessibility section](#) on the UUA website, or contact a member of the UUA staff, for guidance for including people with specific disabilities. In addition, some workshop activities suggest specific adaptations under the heading Including All Participants. When planning workshops, consider how individual participants are likely to respond to activities. In some situations, substituting an alternate activity may be helpful.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Building the World We Dream About uses a transformative approach to reach its educational goals. A transformative approach asks questions that are designed to produce new outcomes to seemingly intractable problems related to the ways we act on values, feelings, and meanings that we have uncritically

assimilated from others. This educational approach then invites an additional question: After learning what is at the root of one's experience and perception, how can one think and act differently? Participants are invited to engage in careful personal reflection coupled with action-making. Both practices—personal reflection and faithful action—are central to building an antiracist/multicultural community. Because racism is a learned behavior, disentangling it from our social fabric requires tough-minded, clear-headed, and love-filled action.

This program does not offer learning experiences in which expertise is delivered by an outside authority figure. Rather, it provides a series of first-person and group experiences, each intended to build on personal histories, Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values, and the racialized experiences of White people and People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity. Participants focus on the context and experiences that are active in their/your groups and community. Such a process generates frank conversations and discussions about race—often avoided, but very much needed—in groups and communities. The dialogues and conversations will lead participants to new insights about social, community, campus, and work place groups of which they are a part, and, more importantly, to a heightened awareness of policies and practices that make the inclusion of People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity more likely and sustainable.

Antiracism work is inherently spiritual work, and the program includes spiritual practices (worship, meditation, sharing, and truth-telling) that both support and encourage the difficult work of reaching across channels of difference. The Reverend John Buehrens said it well: "Blessed are you who know that the work of the church is transformation of society, who have a vision of Beloved Community transcending the present."

The program also pays attention to the reality that people learn and come to understand human experience and their world in different ways. Participants experience a variety of learning strategies, each of which is intended to take ordinary perceptions and turn them on their heads. The learning strategies will enable participants to see familiar things in a different light. They also provide opportunities to make connections to experiences previously considered foreign or strange.

The program recognizes that our race/ethnicity is but one of the social identities that inform how we see ourselves and make sense of the world. For instance, a Latino can also be a middle-aged, gay Southerner who uses a wheelchair. Becoming conscious of the intersection of identities helps us build a welcoming community; it can be complicated, but it can also be glorious!

All workshops include these elements:

### **Introduction**

The Introduction summarizes the workshop content and offers guidance for implementing the workshop.

### **Goals**

Goals provide the desired outcomes of the workshop. As you plan a workshop, apply your knowledge of the group, the time and space you have available, and your own strengths as co-leaders to determine the most important and achievable goals for the workshop. Choose activities that will best serve those goals.

### **Learning Objectives**

Learning Objectives describe specific participant outcomes that the workshop activities are designed to facilitate. They describe what participants may learn and how they may change as a result of the experience of the workshop.

### **Workshop-at-a-Glance**

This useful table lists the core workshop activities in order and provides an estimated time for completing each activity. It also presents Alternate Activities for the workshop.

Workshop-at-a-Glance is not a road map you must follow. Rather, use it as a menu for planning the workshop. You will decide which elements to use and how to combine them to best suit the group, the meeting space, and the amount of time you have.

Keep in mind that many variables inform the actual completion time for an activity. Whole-group discussions will take longer in a large group than in a small group. Consider the time you will need to form small groups or relocate participants to another area of the meeting room.

### **Spiritual Preparation**

Under Spiritual Preparation, each workshop suggests readings, reflections, and/or other preparation to help facilitators grow spiritually and prepare to facilitate with confidence and depth.

**Opening.** Each workshop begins with a short opening ritual, including a welcome, chalice lighting, and a reading or song. It often includes opportunity for comments and further observations and insights from the previous session. Shape the opening ritual to suit your group and the culture and practices of your congregation.

**Activities.** Several activities form the core content of each workshop. To provide a coherent learning experience, present the activities in the sequence suggested. Generally, workshops balance listening with talking, and include individual, small group, and whole group explorations.

Each activity lists the materials and preparation you will need, followed by a description of the activity:

**Materials for Activity** — List of the supplies needed.

**Preparation for Activity** — "To-do" list that specifies all the advance work you need to do for the activity, from copying handouts to writing questions on newsprint to testing an Internet connection just before participants arrive. Look at the preparation tasks several days ahead to make sure you have ample time to obtain items and make special arrangements if needed.

**Description of Activity** — Detailed directions for implementing the activity with the group. Read activity descriptions carefully during your planning process so you understand each activity and its purpose. Later, when you lead the group, use the description as a step-by-step, how-to manual.

**Including All Participants** — Specific accessibility guidance for activities that have unusual physical circumstances or for which a reminder about inclusion may benefit leaders. Please consult Integrating All Participants in this Introduction for general suggestions to meet some common accessibility needs.

**Closing.** Each workshop offers a closing ritual that signals the end of the group's time together. During the Closing, you might introduce the workshop's Taking It Home ideas, offer time for brief written or verbal responses to the workshop, and offer closing words. Like the Opening, the Closing grounds a shared learning experience in ritual. Shape your closing ritual to fit the group and the culture and practices of your congregation.

**Leader Reflection and Planning.** Find time as co-facilitators to discuss these questions after each workshop to strengthen your skills and your understanding of the group.

**Alternate Activities.** Some workshops offer Alternate Activities to modify or expand a workshop. Review Alternate Activities along with the core activities when planning a workshop. Select the activities you feel will work best for you and the group.

**Resources.** Workshops include all materials needed to lead each workshop activity. These may include:

**Stories** — Text of narrative material to read aloud to the group.

**Handouts** — Sheets to print out and copy for participants. Some handouts are for use in the workshop and others provide additional information for participants to take home and read.

**Leader Resources** — Background information and/or activity directions you will need during the workshop.

**Find Out More.** The last page of each workshop directs you to online resources maintained by the UUA's

Multicultural Growth and Witness staff group: readings, websites, films, music, and other tools to extend understanding.

## LEADER GUIDELINES

Leaders are urged to pay particular attention to their own spiritual preparation work ahead of leading the workshop. You may want to set aside time for personal study, prayer, meditation, and journaling.

At times, participants are invited to explore what may be challenging emotional territory. At those times, be sure to both maintain appropriate boundaries for yourself and the group and affirm each person's sharing of experiences. Because stories that involve emotional experiences can be difficult to retrieve and share, become comfortable with silences as participants find their voices.

Congregations, districts, groups, and communities participating in Building the World We Dream About and Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults are supported by the Multicultural Growth and Witness staff group. More information about program support can be found at [www.uua.org/buildingworld](http://www.uua.org/buildingworld).

## IMPLEMENTATION

Every congregation, district, organization, or group has its own culture and way of scheduling young adult programming. The eight workshops of Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults are best done sequentially, but can be used in a variety of ways. Here are some possibilities:

- Offer eight two-hour sessions on a regular weekly or bi-weekly schedule
- Offer the entire program as a weekend or week-long conference program
- Offer the program in two separate full-day events.

Workshops 1 and 2 offer participants practice in understanding how perspectives are shaped by life experience and by racial and ethnic identity, and introduce protocols and practices that support multicultural sharing. Workshops 3 and 4 introduce the concept of "White privilege" and explore its manifestations in individual, group, and community contexts. Workshops 5 through 8 build participants' multicultural competency skills. Workshop 5 offers views of "Whiteness" from the perspective of Unitarian Universalist People of Color and those marginalized by race or ethnicity and invites participants to meet in racial/ethnic identity-based reflection groups. It offers alternate plans for small groups which are not racial/ethnic identity based. Workshops 6 and 7 offer real-life stories of Unitarian Universalist young adults engaging in antiracism, antioppression, multicultural

work as personal and spiritual practice, as well as an opportunity to build skills by through role-playing and reflection. Workshop 8 invites participants to commit to further learning, initiatives, and projects to build their own multicultural skills as well as build and strengthen multicultural inclusion in communities of which they are a part.

If you are interested in offering only part of the program, note that Workshops 1 and 2 can each stand alone as a 2-hour workshop experience. Workshops 1, 2, and 3 together can be offered as a single 6-hour program. Workshops 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be offered as a single 8-hour program. Workshops 5, 6, 7, and 8 should only be offered after participants have participated in the first four workshops.

### Creating Reflection Groups

Participants gather in small groups for sharing and processing in several different configurations. Sometimes they gather according to specific experiences or interests, as indicated in the activity descriptions. In Workshop 5 and 8, participants meet in race- and identity-based groups. On all other occasions, participants should meet in a consistent, intentionally diverse small reflection group created by co-facilitators. Take time to carefully consider each participant and create reflection groups of about five people that will convene periodically throughout the program. Consider a variety of attributes, such as each participant's racial, ethnic, and cultural identity; age; gender identity; temperament (e.g., introvert/extravert); and any gifts, challenges, and life experiences of which you are aware. Avoid placing family members together in a group. Reconfigure the small groups only if necessary to keep the group functioning well.

Note: Although it is strongly recommended that groups in Workshops 5 and 8 be formed on the basis of racial/ethnic identity to create safe space for conversation and exploration, there are situations where, due to the lack of diversity in the group, small size of the group, or lack of maturity of participants, formation of such groups is not appropriate. For such cases, participants should gather in their established small reflection groups.

## BEFORE YOU START

### Determine the calendar schedule for workshops.

Enter the information in the congregational, district, or group calendar. Sample announcements are offered as Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1.

**Invite participants.** Make an effort to personally invite individuals to participate. If appropriate, also use flyers, announcements, social media, and other publicity channels. A sample welcome letter for registrants is included in Workshop 1, Leader Resource 2. You may wish to include a copy of Workshop 1, Handout 1,



Guidelines that Promote Multicultural Dialogue, with the welcome letter.

**Choose a meeting space.** The workshop space should be large enough to comfortably seat all participants and should have an easel or wall space for newsprint. Some activities call for a different arrangement of furniture, breakout spaces for small groups, or tables for working with art materials.

**Arrange for child care.** If participants need child care in order to participate, make arrangements to offer it.

**Pay attention to workshops that require significant advance preparation.** Some workshops require extra preparation or advance arrangements:

- Workshop 2: Obtain postcards for the postcard exercise.
- Workshop 3: Obtain materials for collages, including old magazines. Download video and acquire projector and speakers.
- Workshop 4: Obtain materials for aesthetic journaling.
- Workshop 5: Access video and obtain a large monitor or a digital projector, and (recommended) speakers.
- Workshop 7: Obtain simple costumes for skits (such as scarves, fabric pieces, and hats). If using Alternate Activity 1, obtain equipment to share podcast.

**Terminology and language usage.** When Unitarian Universalists ask "How can we become more diverse or more multicultural?" they are generally referring to racial and ethnic diversity, rather than to other kinds of diversity. For this reason, when we use the term "antiracist/multicultural faith community" or speak of "multicultural competency" in this program, the multiculturalism to which we refer is racial and ethnic diversity. Although racial and ethnic identities can and do intersect and overlap with other identities, including social class, gender orientation, affectional orientation, and ability/disability, the focus of Building the World We Dream About is race and ethnicity.

Never in our shared history has it been more difficult to find language to describe accurately or "name" our racial/ethnic selves. Linguists tell us the words we use not only express ideas, but actually shape the way we understand ourselves and others. Because of this reality, it is important to consider the role of language in the work of building multiracial/multicultural congregations.

Consider:

- A person from Jamaica may self-identify as Jamaican, Black, Caribbean, or as a Person of Color.

- A person with Asian facial features and dark brown eyes, skin, and hair may reveal that she considers herself a white person.
- Some Latinas/os and Asians flinch when they hear themselves included in the term "People of Color." They may say this label too narrowly defines them or excludes the complexity of their ethnic or cultural identity in the world.
- Imagine a blended family with a Muslim, Palestinian person (considered "White" by the U.S. government) who marries an African American. What racial/ethnic identity best describes members of that family?
- Some African Americans prefer not to use that label because they see few—if any—connections in their daily lives to the continent and people of Africa.

To build multicultural competency, we need to let go of the notion that one "correct" terminology will apply to all situations. Sometimes people from the dominant culture assume the right to decide what word or words are appropriate to name another person's race or ethnicity, often in the name of clarity or ease of use. However, to assume the right to name another's experience or to decide what term best describes another's race or ethnicity is to imply, "My dominant status is so powerful I get to decide how others should name themselves." Names are important, especially to the one who is being named!

The question of language is even more complex when we take into account the fact that the categories and terms we use to describe ourselves and others are not static, but fluid and overlapping. We must remain open to hearing how people describe themselves, and we must learn from those exchanges. Building the World We Dream About seeks to empower individuals and congregations to restructure our racist world by learning how to identify differences in language and perspective and discern what those differences mean in particular congregational and community contexts.

Recognizing that language is always imprecise in naming racial/ethnic or cultural experiences, for editorial purposes, choices have been made about language use in this program. While the political activist community uses the phrase "People of Color" when speaking of those marginalized by systems of privilege and oppression, some people who are marginalized by those systems do not feel included by the umbrella term, "People of Color." To be as inclusive as possible, this program uses the phrase "People of Color and other people marginalized by race and ethnicity" to describe persons and groups that have been systematically oppressed by dominant groups and cultures. This phrase is meant to include racial/ethnic identity groups such as African Americans, Native Americans or First

Nations Peoples, Latinas/os, Asians, and Pacific Islanders, as well as persons with white skin (or who classify/are classified as White) who, nonetheless, experience discrimination, exclusion, or oppression at the hands of the dominant racial/ethnic group. People whose heritage is Arab, Middle Eastern, Latinas/o, and Jewish may see themselves in this experience.

The program author and editor realize that even the descriptors in "People of Color and other people marginalized by race and ethnicity" may leave participants with uneasy thoughts and feelings. We invite you to talk in the workshops about these tensions and also to be open to new insights and varied perspectives.

There are Unitarian Universalists who believe the term "antiracism" carries a negative tone and, ultimately, moves justice work away from the values of individual freedom and societal equity. These critics argue that such terminology inadvertently re-centers "Whiteness" as the norm instead of creating language that refuses to divide people along racial/ethnic lines. Indeed, cultural theorists such as Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann have created material to break us out of this problem, for example by focusing on a more positive, "color consciousness" approach to this work.

Building the World We Dream About builds on Unitarian Universalist history and congregations' expressed desire for an antiracism/multiculturalism program. This program is grounded in a belief that race and racism are so much a part of the fabric of our individual and collective lives that Unitarian Universalists and other justice-seeking people must take intentional steps to name racism and dismantle its vestiges. We must actively challenge racism, and rewire our hearts and minds to overcome it.

## PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

### Unitarian Universalist Principles

There are seven Principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

### Unitarian Universalist Sources

Unitarian Universalism draws from many Sources:

Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;

Words and deeds of prophetic women and men, which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;

Wisdom from the world's religions, which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;

Jewish and Christian teachings, which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;

Humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit; and

Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

## RESOURCES

**Print, online, and audio/video resources for further exploration of the themes, topics, and issues.** The Multicultural Growth and Witness Staff Group at the UUA provides resources online for further exploration of issues raised in this program, including links to organizations and online resources and an annotated bibliography of print resources and films for study and discussion.

**Consultation and support for implementation of the program.** For questions and concerns regarding implementation of the program, contact the Multicultural Growth and Witness Staff Group at [multicultural@uaa.org](mailto:multicultural@uaa.org).

## **FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM**

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

Faith Development Office  
Ministries and Faith Development  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
24 Farnsworth Street  
Boston, MA 02210-1409  
religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

Did you work with (a) co-facilitator(s)?

Your name:

***Overall, what was your experience with this program?***

***What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?***

***In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?***

***Did you enrich the program with any resources that you would recommend to others?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?***

## **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM**

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

Faith Development Office  
Ministries and Faith Development  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
24 Farnsworth Street  
Boston, MA 02210-1409  
religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

***Overall, what was your experience with this program?***

***What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?***

***In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?***

# WORKSHOP 1: TELLING OUR STORY: MULTIPLE TRUTHS AND MULTIPLE REALITIES

## INTRODUCTION

*What is true is that for Unitarian Universalism to move into a vibrant future, we will need to mine our past for stories of resistance to oppression, stories of openness to new ways of being religious, stories of transformation that have built new understandings into our narrative of who we are. — Rev. William G. Sinkford, past president of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

This workshop introduces key program elements including stories, dialogue, personal reflection, and sharing with others in small and large groups.

Participants consider questions of confidentiality and emotional and spiritual safety as the group begins its journey together. The workshop invites them to engage with their own experiences and those of others as they explore affirming and marginalizing experiences.

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Set the tone for the program and introduce underlying group processes
- Demonstrate that experiences can create positive feelings of inclusion (insider or mattering experiences) or feelings of exclusion (outsider or marginalizing experiences)
- Explore mattering and marginalizing experiences of participants and others.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Meet one another and create a covenant
- Recognize that some experiences can create positive feelings of inclusion (mattering) and others can create feelings of exclusion (marginality)

- Hear stories of mattering and marginality from Unitarian Universalists with a variety of ethnic and racial identities
- Reflect on personal experiences of inclusion and marginalization.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	2
Activity 1: Welcome and Introductions	30
Activity 2: Making a Covenant	10
Activity 3: Outsider Experiences	15
Activity 4: Learning from the Other Within — Theater of Voices	55
Closing	8

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

As you prepare to lead the first workshop, reflect on how your life's journey has led you to this moment. Why is Building the World We Dream About important to you? Share your experiences and reasons with your co-leader.

Read carefully all the stories in Leader Resource 2, Affirming Experiences and Marginalizing Experiences, pausing for a time after each one to consider your own experiences of inclusion and exclusion. When have you felt as though you mattered? When have you felt marginalized or excluded? Can you recall times in your congregation when you mattered? Times when you were marginalized?

## OPENING (2 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1, [Sample Program Publicity](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Sample Welcome Letter for Participants](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 3, [Poem – Telling](#) (included in this document)

## Preparation for Activity

- Use Leader Resources 1 and 2 well in advance of this program, to recruit and prepare/welcome participants in advance of the first workshop.
- Practice reading Leader Resource 3, Poem — Telling, aloud.

## Description of Activity

Light the chalice or invite a participant to light it while you read Laura Hershey's poem, "Telling," aloud.

## ACTIVITY 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (30 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 4, [Program Goals](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: An object participants can pass from speaker to speaker

### Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
  - Why have you decided to be part of a program that talks about race and ethnicity? Why are race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism important in your life?
- Next to this sheet, post blank newsprint.
- Copy Leader Resource 4, Program Goals for all participants, or write the program goals on newsprint, and post.

### Description of Activity

Invite participants to introduce themselves, saying their name and where they are from, and then to share a story that is often told about them by family or friends. For example, "My partner always says I never order food without asking 20 questions of the wait staff." Explain that each person has one minute to tell their story and that you will gently enforce the time limit in order to keep the workshop moving. Go first, to model one-minute storytelling. Then encourage participants to speak as they are ready and comfortable. You may wish to use an object such as a stone or talking stick that each person can hold while they speak. If the group is large, you may choose to simply go around the room and ask people to say their name and where they are from, and then form groups of four or five to share one-minute stories.

Indicate the questions you have posted. Invite participants to generate a list of reasons they have chosen to be part of this program. Write each response on newsprint.

Indicate or distribute the program goals (Leader Resource 4). Read them aloud or have volunteers read.

## Including All Participants

To accommodate different learning styles (for example, aural versus visual learners) and to be inclusive of people who are visually impaired, read aloud the posted questions, handouts, and any other written materials.

## ACTIVITY 2: MAKING A COVENANT (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Guidelines That Promote Multicultural Dialogue](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Write the word "covenant" on a piece of newsprint, list the following agreements underneath, and post the newsprint:
  - Honor and practice guidelines that promote multicultural dialogue.
  - Start and end on time, and return promptly from breaks.
  - Share the floor.
  - Learn something new.
  - Nurture your spirit.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1. Invite participants to read it quickly, noting that most will have already read these guidelines before this workshop.

Call attention to the posted agreements. Write on newsprint participants' suggestions, concerns, or additions to the list.

Decide together if you will make changes to the guidelines presented in the handout or to the posted agreements which will become the group covenant.

Invite the group to covenant together to honor and uphold the covenant. Ask each person to signal assent by saying "yes" or nodding. Explain that the covenant is a living document; it can and should be changed as the group evolves.

## ACTIVITY 3: OUTSIDER EXPERIENCES (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Journals, one for each participant

- Pens and pencils

### Preparation for Activity

- Before the workshop, ask participants to bring a journal and writing instrument to the workshop. Or, purchase journals for all participants.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
  - What was the experience? Recall it in as much detail as possible.
  - What made you the person who was "different" or the "outsider?" How did others treat you as a result?
  - What was the impact of your outsider experience on how you felt about and participated in the group?
  - How did that experience shape your sense of who you are and how you behave in the world or similar settings?

### Description of Activity

Make sure each participant has a journal and a pen/pencil.

Explain that the journals have two purposes: To record ideas, quotes, and concepts from workshops, and to record participants' reflections, thoughts, and feelings. Invite participants to use any form they wish, such as poetry, bulleted points, idea webs, symbols, or narrative/story.

Now, say:

I invite you to begin your journal work by recording a powerful experience in which you felt like an outsider. Use the questions posted on newsprint to help guide your remembering. This is a private journal exercise. You will not be sharing this story in the workshop. Instead, you are asked to hold the story in your heart and use it as a point of reference in our future discussions.

Allow ten minutes for writing. Then invite comments and observations about the experience of recalling such a moment.

### Including All Participants

For people with physical disabilities who may not be able to write, find a private area where the person can record their story or dictate it confidentially to a facilitator.

## ACTIVITY 4: LEARNING FROM THE OTHER WITHIN — THEATER OF VOICES (55 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 5, [Affirming Experiences and Marginalizing Experiences](#) (included in this document)
- Music (two different selections), and music player
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

### Preparation for Activity

- Work with your co-facilitator to select and arrange the material provided in Leader Resource 5. Choose the voices you wish to share with the group and arrange them for dramatic effect. For example, you might alternate affirming and marginalizing experiences, or group similar perspectives together. If you do not use all the voices, make sure your selections represent a diversity. You might number the experiences in the order in which they will be presented. Print two copies of your customized handout and cut one apart so you can provide individual voices to different volunteer readers.
- Arrange for participant volunteers to read parts in the Theater of Voices, and give them the text well in advance, reserving the first reading for one of the facilitators in order to demonstrate dramatic reading. Note: it is possible that all, or most, workshop participants will be part of the theatre of voices and/or that some participants will read more than one piece.
- Arrange to use a meeting room large enough to stage a reading with multiple participants.
- Select music to open and close the reading. Possibilities include:
  - John Lennon's "Imagine," as sung by Eva Cassidy on the CD *Imagine*, Blix Street Records, 2002
  - David Wilcox, "The Inside of My Head" or "Step Inside Your Skin," from *What You Whispered*, Vanguard Records, 2000
  - "Somewhere," from the Broadway musical, *West Side Story*; recommended version, Aretha Franklin on the CD *Songs of West Side Story* (RCA/Victor, 1996)
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:

- How did it feel to be part of/observe this production?
- Which voice do you identify with? Which voice makes you want to say, "I am exactly that" or "I've done/said that"?
- Which voice do you recognize—as if to say, "I am not exactly like that, but I know someone who is"?
- Which voice resonates with you, as if to say, "I don't know why, but that person awakens a strong feeling or memory in me?"

### Description of Activity

Remind participants that the experience of being either an insider or outsider in a group is a universal human experience. Say:

You are invited to take part in and witness a Theater of Voices that will present real life experiences of contemporary Unitarian Universalists—some affirming and some marginalizing. If you are part of the audience, make yourself comfortable as you prepare to listen to stories from Unitarian Universalist persons who identify as People of Color and others marginalized by race or ethnicity and Unitarian Universalists who identify as White or of European ancestry. If you are one of the reader/actors, come on up!

Arrange the reader/actors. Make sure they know the order in which they will read. Tell them that one facilitator will play the role of director, assuring that each voice is respected by pausing the reading for seven to ten seconds between voices and starting the next actor/reader with a nonverbal cue. The other facilitator will act as the first reader, modeling dramatic reading. Invite reader/actors to read the name and ethnic or racial identity of the person before reading each narrative.

Depending on your group size, you may have actors and an audience, or you may have most, or all, workshop participants taking part in the dramatic production. Invite participants, whether or not they are part of the production, to listen to the voices being given life by actors and to note their responses to each person's story.

Open the theater with music you have selected. Enact your Theater of Voices. After the last statement/voice, close your theater with music you have selected or with another suitable closing, such as a time of silence.

If you choose not to do the Theater of Voices, co-facilitators can alternate reading the short narratives. Again, choose and order the voices to maximize their

impact and pause seven to ten seconds after each reading.

Post the questions you have written on newsprint and read them aloud. Invite participants to turn to a partner and respond to the questions, telling them they have about 12 minutes for sharing. Let them know when six minutes have passed so both individuals have time to speak.

After 12 minutes, re-gather the group. Lead a discussion with these questions:

- What did you find interesting about your partner's observations and reflections? Which were similar to yours? What was different?
- What do these experiences say about the experience of People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity in a Unitarian Universalist setting? What do these experiences say about the experience of White people in a Unitarian Universalist setting?
- How do the stories you've heard connect or disconnect with your own stories?

### Including All Participants

Have large-print copies of the narratives on hand to offer anyone who is visually impaired.

## CLOSING (8 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- A copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Taking It Home for all participants.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to follow up on this workshop by observing situations where people are affirmed and situations where people are marginalized because of perceptions based on their race and/or ethnicity. Invite a few volunteers to describe situations of affirmation or marginalization they have already experienced or observed in daily life. Decide how your group will share your observations with one another (social media, a blog, an in-person discussion, and email conversation are possibilities). Decide together on a communication medium to which all participants have access. If this is a stand-alone workshop rather than one in a series, particularly encourage group members to communicate with one another afterward about their observations and experiences.



Offer Reading 701 in *Singing the Living Tradition* as a closing and extinguish the chalice.

### **Including All Participants**

Prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home.

## **LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING**

Take a few moments right after the workshop to ask each other:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do we need to make changes in the way we work together?

## **TAKING IT HOME**

What is true is that for Unitarian Universalism to move into a vibrant future, we will need to mine our past for stories of resistance to oppression, stories of openness to new ways of being religious, stories of transformation that have built new understandings into our narrative of who we are. — Rev. William G. Sinkford, past president of the Unitarian Universalist Association

An important part of multicultural competency is being an astute observer of cultural messages about who belongs and who doesn't. Practice noticing situations where people matter, and where they are marginalized, due to perceptions based on race or ethnicity. If you are the person being marginalized in a particular situation, how do you choose to respond? If you observe another person being marginalized, how do you choose to respond? You might blog, take pictures, or create a video journal to share your observations with others in the group.

# HANDOUT 1: GUIDELINES THAT PROMOTE MULTICULTURAL DIALOGUE

(other than your own stories) with people outside the group.

*Use these suggestions to slow down the flurry of assumptions that can come into play when we talk together about the stories and truths that shape our lives. Following these guidelines can help every participant fully engage with others and grow from our interactions.*

- Ask questions from the standpoint of curiosity, rather than arguing or debating another's point of view.
- Use "I" statements when sharing experiences, feelings, and opinions.
- Withhold unsolicited personal judgments.
- Speak from personal experience; avoid generalizing your experience to include others you perceive to be similar to you.
- Consider the implications of asking People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity to speak as "experts" on their particular culture, race, or ethnicity.
- Set your own boundaries for personal sharing. Ask yourself, "What parts of my life story am I comfortable sharing?"
- Be willing to examine and grapple with the ways personal assumptions shape your "truths."
- Speak personal "truths" in constructive and civil ways.
- As a speaker, consider how your individual communication style affects others.
- As a listener, be willing to sit with your discomfort with other people's personal "truth(s)."
- Speak personal concerns directly with that person, not about them.
- Recognize that the work we do together is sometimes difficult and that our overall goal is to stay "at the table" together. This will involve taking risks.
- Respect and validate other people's experiences; it is not useful to argue that one oppression is more or less valid or important than another oppression.
- Talking about sessions with nonmembers of the group is okay, but do not share personal content

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: SAMPLE PROGRAM PUBLICITY

## For your newsletter or website

Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults is a Unitarian Universalist program that seeks to interrupt the workings of racism and transform how people from different racial/ethnic groups understand and relate to one another. Specifically tailored to take into account the life experiences and situations of young adults, it offers

- honest and open conversations about race
- tools to better understand your own ethnic and racial identity and journey
- practical skills you need in your own life *right now* in an increasingly multicultural world

The program, facilitated by [names] will be offered by [sponsoring organization] [day, date, time, and place]. For more information or to sign up, please contact [registrar, contact information].

## For Facebook page, Sunday e-bulletin, or other online post

[Sponsoring organization] is offering Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults, a UU program that guides honest and open conversations about race and practical tools for navigating a multicultural world.

Facilitated by [names]

Offered [date, day, time, and place]

Link to more information and registration

## For Twitter

#UU program features honest conversations about race, tools for multicultural world. (Insert link to publicity/registration)

## LEADER RESOURCE 2: SAMPLE WELCOME LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear

Thank you for registering for Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults. The (program/conference/first workshop) will take place (day, date, time, and place).

This program (these workshops) seeks to interrupt the workings of racism and transform how people from different racial/ethnic groups understand and relate to one another. It features:

- honest and open conversations about race
- tools to better understand your own ethnic and racial identity and journey
- practical skills you need in your own life *right now* as you make their way in an increasingly multicultural world

There will be time for personal reflection, small group conversation, art and drama activities, and worship. We ask that you bring:

- a personal journal
- Workshop 1, Handout 1, Guidelines that Promote Multicultural Dialogue (enclosed with this letter)
- (list appropriate to your circumstances, which may include sleeping things, snacks, musical instruments, and so on)
- An open mind, an open heart, and a willingness to grow and change

We very much look forward to your participation in this program. If you have questions about the site, please contact (registrar). If you have questions about the program, please contact one of us.

In faith,

[Facilitator names and contact information]

## LEADER RESOURCE 3: POEM — TELLING

"Telling" is used with permission. For more information about Laura's poetry and other writing, go to her [website](http://www.laurahershey.com), [www.laurahershey.com](http://www.laurahershey.com).

What you risk telling your story:

You will bore them.

Your voice will break, your ink will  
spill and stain your coat.

No one will understand, their eyes  
become fences.

You will park yourself forever  
on the outside, your differentness once  
and for all revealed, dangerous,  
the names you give to yourself  
will become epithets.

Your happiness will be called  
bravery, denial.

Your sadness will justify their pity.

Your fear will magnify their fears.

Everything you say will prove something about  
their god, or their economic system.

Your feelings, that change day  
to day, kaleidoscopic,  
will freeze in place,  
brand you forever,  
justify anything they decide to do  
with you.

Those with power can afford  
to tell their story  
or not.

Those without power  
risk everything to tell their story  
and must.

Someone, somewhere  
will hear your story and decide to fight,  
to live and refuse compromise.

Someone else will tell

her own story,  
risking everything.

## **LEADER RESOURCE 4: PROGRAM GOALS**

This program will:

- Provide participants with a better understanding of people who are different from them
- Deepen participants' ability to communicate openly and clearly with those in their circle of friends and acquaintances
- Present the idea that racism is a social construct which can be deconstructed
- Explore Whiteness and how it is viewed by people of different racial and ethnic identities
- Offer an opportunity to name, heal, and reconcile past and current racial wounds
- Identify ways to build multiracial/multicultural communities of love and justice
- Present Unitarian Universalist theology, tradition, and Principles as a basis for antiracism, antioppression, and multicultural work.

## LEADER RESOURCE 5: AFFIRMING EXPERIENCES AND MARGINALIZING EXPERIENCES

*This resource includes several first-person narratives from Unitarian Universalists, many of them young adults, describing experiences of being affirmed and experiences of being marginalized. Introduce these voices and experiences using a Theater of Voices technique as described Activity 4.*

*Select four or five statements from the "Affirming Experiences" section and a similar number from the "Marginalizing Experiences" section. Pick and choose voices that speak best to your context. Choose about the same number of statements from People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity as you do from people who identify as White or of European ancestry.*

*After you have selected your material, consider the order of the voices and how to arrange participants visually "on stage" for the most impact. Let your imagination lead you. For example, you might intersperse or alternate affirming experiences and marginalizing experiences, or you might put two readers side by side and invite them to read two different narratives from a single person. As you prepare your production, note that each narrative will take two to three minutes to present.*

### AFFIRMING EXPERIENCES

Frances, African American

To be African American in this country is to face racism throughout life, however subtle. The love of one's family is paramount in reducing the damage of racism on one's wholeness. Unitarian Universalism is splendid as an affirming church family. Its primary commitment to justice seeking, its deep belief that every soul has irreducible value, and its belief that there is the spark of the divine in every one of us are powerful antidotes to the insistent racist voices among us. I find Unitarian Universalism not only soothing, but healing. It is a perfect medicine for the soul made sick by racism.

Ellen, age 22, White

I questioned my gender identity a lot while I was in college. Long hair, short hair, skirts, cargo pants, binding, not binding... and for a while, I even changed my name. It was during this experimental social transition that I realized how supportive my professors were. After I e-mailed them letting them know about my impending name change, I received messages not only acknowledging it, but letting me know that they were proud of me for making that decision, asking clarifying questions about how I wanted to be addressed or

referred to, and letting me know that they had my back if I ran into problems because of my gender identity. But I didn't realize the whole extent of their support until I went back to going by my birth name. My changing identities didn't mean that they were going to take me less seriously, respect me less, or be less of an advocate for me when I needed it. At that point in my life, it turned out that what was most important to me wasn't necessarily that they were supportive of my choice in gender presentation, but that they cared about and respected me regardless.

Daniel, age 30, Haitian American

I felt most affirmed in my identity as an African American of Haitian ancestry when I was able to share a Haitian song with my UU congregation during a service I led. The Director of Music took the time to learn the song *Fey-O* and set the words to music so that the congregation could sing along. The song was admittedly a challenge for many people in the church due to the language and the pace of the music, but I really appreciated the effort, and I had a good laugh afterwards with the Music Director. Many people in the congregation appreciated having the opportunity to learn something about my childhood and being able to share in it through music.

Supriya, Asian elder

Perhaps one of the most positive and affirming experiences within Unitarian Universalism for me was when I offered to my minister to co-lead with another lay leader a "People of Colour" worship service. Another friend of South Asian ethnicity and I had just returned from a Young Adults of Colour Leadership Development Conference. After meeting young adults from across North America, we returned to Canada inspired and full of energy and courage to have our voices heard. We led a beautiful service that included music from our South Asian heritage, special readings, and meditations. We also introduced Indian classical dance into our worship service. Our title was about the Unitarian Universalist covenant to "promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person". We spoke about how we felt when congregants spoke as if we were sisters (we were not related in any way) or asked where we really came from when giving the city of our birth was an unsatisfactory answer. We spoke of wanting to be accepted as individuals for what we were, not based on the colour of our skin. We spoke of how we felt when the colour of our skin stood in the way of accepting us as individuals. Reaction was positive, and many congregants thanked us for sharing our views. We closed with the song "Woyaya"—"... We are going / Heaven knows how we will get there / But we know we will..." That day we felt affirmed as "People of Colour"—our voices were heard.

Chanda, White

Living in a city where your job defines your identity, you quickly learn that the first question you get asked in almost any gathering is, "What do you do?" Yet, in my congregation, not a person asked me the "Job Question." Instead, they asked things like, "Could you help us out on this project?" and "Would you like to join us for lunch?" Just like that...free acceptance. I was stunned. These people didn't care about my credentials, about my background, about my appearance. If I said I was good at something, they invited me to help out there. When I volunteered to start a new member orientation program, people just assumed I'd do well. When, as a board member, I declined to make follow-up pledge calls, nobody gave me a hard time. Other than from my mother, I've never had such unquestioning acceptance. It feels wildly luxurious to not have to present any persona other than who I really am. And yet, this is not a place where "whatever" rules. We have many expectations of each other: shared values, civility with each other, showing the courage of our convictions, giving generously of time and money, taking action for social justice. In my congregation, we seem to care about what you do in community, not what you do in your day job.

India, age 25, Black

Most recently I had the opportunity to meet one of my favorite authors. I find that I relate to much of what she's written in her poetry and essays on identity, growing up as a multiracial lesbian of Menominee descent. She was in New York to speak as the key note speaker at the fifteen year anniversary of the Audre Lorde Project. She'd known Audre Lorde as a close comrade in the struggle for civil rights for people of color and lgbt people. I went with a friend to pick her up from her hotel. As we rode to the venue she spoke with about her experiences in the movement as well as her everyday life. She listened as we shared and gave us advice on the challenges we were currently facing. I felt affirmed as a young gay woman of color to have an elder reflect that being who we were wasn't about being an different or strange but just as beautiful and commonplace as the sun rising.

Beth, age 27, White

For many people, families are the most difficult people in life to come out to. So when my partner and I decided to get married and mailed out invitations to our entire family, we were taking a risk. We were taking a risk not because any of the family would be finding out about our relationship for the first time, but because we were asking for them to reply as to whether they would attend. We figured that some of our family that we haven't kept in close touch with would decline, but we still made a point of extending the invitation to all. While many members of my partner's family never returned the RSVP card, the one cousin who did wrote in big letters

at the bottom, "We will not be in attendance due to our belief that marriage is only recognized as a union between one man and one woman forever as defined by God." Although this cousin's belief was not news to us, the fact that she returned the card with this written on it was very hurtful.

We hesitated to share what happened with the rest of the family, but when we "leaked" the information to my partner's brother the news spread fast. Family members expressed shock and disappointment with the cousin, reiterating over and over again that "this is not how we treat family." (Of course, I thought, "this is not how we should treat anyone!") When news reached my partner's parents and other extended family, they made sure we knew that they supported us, they supported our relationship, and they loved us. My decision to marry a woman brought out some of the most marginalizing and hurtful responses I've ever felt because of who I am, but I am grateful that it also brought out some of the most loving expressions from family and friends.

Brian, age 24, Puerto Rican

I think that a day that I felt uplifted by one of my identities was on my wedding day. I felt such nervousness and worry. I wanted everything to look perfect and go right. But, when I stood there and I saw the faces of those assembled there. The family and friends stood there in support of me. I know that not many lgbt people get that kind of support and love. I know that sometimes people have to marry with no family around them. They knew, though, that I loved myself and unconditionally accepted who I was born to be. In that moment, which now seems so very fleeting, the room was filled with immense love.

## MARGINALIZING EXPERIENCES

Supriya, Asian elder

What I find challenging within Unitarian Universalism is that, although we claim that our living tradition draws on many sources, including "wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life," this is something that I see very rarely in the many UU congregations I have visited in North America. As a first-generation Canadian, I struggle every Sunday with the fact that worship and the teachings from the pulpit provide me with little connection to the wisdom of my ancestors who were Hindus. Although I find strength in my Unitarian Universalist faith, I miss affirmation that my religious background is as important as the Judeo-Christian tradition. This makes me feel somewhat of an outsider, even within my own religious community. Being the child of immigrants, being an outsider has always been a fact of life and has presented many challenges over time. One place where this challenge should not have to present itself is within a religious community. Although I chose Unitarian Universalism because it held



more meaning to me than the religion of my ancestors, I also chose it based on the promise that we would be inspired by the wisdom of the world's religions. I have faith that that day will come.

Daniel, age 23, Multiracial Latino

I felt marginalized growing up in the public school system. Granted, I think any school system would have marginalized me, but public school was rough. I was bilingual, and discouraged from talking in Portuguese. Often I had to be an interpreter when school called because the only adult home was usually my grandmother (both parents worked). I also struggled with expected to be perfect at everything, from both family and the school system. I don't think either of my parents went beyond middle school, and teachers would give me marks on any little thing. People brushed it off as if teachers just do that, but I think myself and other bilingual students were just targeted for that sort of thing. One teacher even said it was to "motivate" me. It only made me miserable, and spiteful. In spite, I did learn how to do everything perfect, but a good chunk of my childhood was spent pleasing others instead of exploring myself.

Bart, age 25, White

I work in a liquor store within a large box store and many times I have people question my intentions, knowledge, or trustworthiness due to my age, class, and appearance. I am a 25 year old white male who works three jobs to pay my bills. A few days ago, I had a gentleman attempt to beckon me over with an "Ahem," a finger point, and a "come here" motion with his finger. When I refused to acknowledge him, he got hostile while I calmly explained that most people ask for assistance, they don't point. That same day, I had another gentleman question whether or not I was going to steal his identity because I called for a manager to approve his personal check. Other times, I've had people say "You don't look old enough to even drink wine, why should I trust you?" not knowing that my other job is for a wine distributor. All of these instances make me feel worthless, like the person I am is only defined by my surroundings, not by my aspirations, goals, or passions.

Alicia, African American

I came back to my congregation after I graduated from college. The racial and ethnic makeup of the congregation mirrored that of the now-gentrified neighborhood surrounding the church. I was not expecting to feel uncomfortable, but I did, instantly. I think it was the looks I received from the new White congregants. They were "What are you doing here?" kind of looks. I wasn't sure if it was my hair, clothes, shoes, or what. But I understood those looks to mean I didn't belong. I'm a Black woman in my twenties who attends a church where I'm free to dress as I want. I've

always loved that about my congregation! But Black urban styles of dress, I guess, made me look like a video girl to them—or at least that's what their eyes said. I felt like they probably thought I was uneducated and ill-mannered.

KCS, age 23, White-Jewish

When I was a senior in high school, I had a crush on a sophomore girl. I felt clueless as to how to approach a same-sex relationship. All of my relationships to that point had been with men. We flirted a lot—nothing beyond that. But, as senior prom came around, I knew exactly who I wanted to ask. She was learning Chinese, so I decided to find out how to ask her to prom in Chinese. She said yes. I was elated! We went to prom looking gorgeous in browns and golds together. Although our relationship never passed the courtship phase, I was proud to have asked her out in such an original way and to have been direct for the first time about my feelings for someone of the same sex.

The next year during spring break of my first year in college, I was sitting with some teammates on the beach, drinking beer. One of the girls put everyone to the task of telling a cute story about prom. Even though I knew words couldn't convey the meaning that my prom experience had had for me, I wanted to tell the story. As each of the girls talked about their cute prom experiences with nice boys, I realized that my story wouldn't just be a cute story. I would be coming out as gay, even though I'm not. I realized that, even if they liked me, this would change how the girls related to me. I played out how the conversation would go after that, in my head. I was uncomfortable with the prospect of turning the conversation toward me and my sexuality. I didn't want to be put on the spot about defining my sexuality (which at that point had no label), and I didn't want to become vulnerable to these girls. So I kept my story and my joy to myself.

I still struggle with the issue of coming out. Based on my sexual behaviors, many people would label me as bisexual, even though I am not. I am well aware of bi-phobia and the problematic dynamic that female-bodied people who love people of many genders encounter when others (often straight men) want a demonstration. I feel that I have a certain level of privilege in not needing to come out. But I also feel sad that I don't share more of this part of myself with the people in my world.

Dominique, age 19, Black

I was in a hurry to get on the subway and I slid my card through quickly behind another person. The station manager began yelling and two police officers began to follow me. The officers grabbed me and asked why I didn't pay my fare. I told them that I did and to check my fare card but they refused. They slammed me against the gates and then arrested me for fare evasion. Not only

did the officers not listen to me but the station manager also refused to check my fare card. I had to sit in the city jail for 48 hours before I was allowed to be released. Incidents like this happen often to me and to most of my guy friends. When I was younger, my city was filled with black folks. Now that more white people moved in, it feels like the cops are everywhere and always harassing other young black dudes.

Sojourner, African American

While experiencing racism with Unitarian Universalism has been painful, the reaction of UUs when I tell them my story has been even more disturbing to me. Usually most White listeners will want to hear the particulars of what happened to judge for themselves whether they would have named the incident as racism, instead of trusting me. I have to repeat time and time and again the what, where, and how, and relive the pain. It feels like I am being judged as to whether our first Principle should be applied to me. Rarely does this trial occur when I share other stories of oppression around the multiple identities I carry. Thank goodness for listeners of Color and White allies. They hear with their hearts and believe me without the nitty-gritty. When I receive this affirmation it helps me heal and move on. My pain is transformed. I have learned to share my experiences of racism with those in power who have the ability to make a change in the UU institution; and with others who hear me without the need to justify the experience within their own unique world.

Chanda, White

As a child attending segregated schools in Louisiana, I was less aware of race as a dividing line than I was of ethnicity, class, and religion. My father's family spoke Cajun French and broken English. They lived in an unpainted wooden house on the sugarcane plantation where my gran'papa worked. Back in those days, "Cajun" was a derogatory term, and my Georgia-born mother was humiliated that we were related to such poor and uneducated people.

My own family lived on the wrong side of the bayou. We were Baptists in a sea of Catholics. Daddy only had an eighth-grade education, and we learned never to tell that secret to anybody. We struggled to maintain a veneer of gentility in our neighborhood of oyster-shell roads and ditches that overflowed every time it rained. I was a voracious reader, and books told me there was another world out there. I couldn't wait to escape Louisiana; adulthood found me living and working in Washington, DC. Only then did I discover that, despite my perceived differences from the middle class we'd desperately wanted to emulate, I'd had benefits and advantages conferred on me because I was White. I'd lost the south Louisiana accent, gone to college, gotten a high-profile job. I am now able both to understand my privileges in

the context of racism and oppression of others and to embrace the gifts of my exuberant "low-class" family.

Daniel, age 30, Haitian American

I can recall a time when I was on a young adult outing with a fairly large group from my congregation at the time. We went to a local diner and in the course of conversation the topic of movies came up. Everyone shared their favorite movies, and a great many people enjoyed the same movies. They were even acting out their favorite scenes from the movies. I had been participating in the conversation up until that point, but I had never seen the films they were discussing. And, the group seemed to really bond with each other in the retelling their favorite movies. These movies were like a distinct

cultural experience that I could not participate in, because my culture was different. I saw different movies growing up. I was completely left out. The conversation stayed on movies, and I felt as though I had become totally invisible. I have never felt more aware of my difference in a UU setting until that moment.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

The UUA Multicultural Growth & Witness staff group offers resources, curricula, trainings, and tools to help Unitarian Universalist congregations and leaders

engage in the work of antiracism, antioppression, and multiculturalism. Visit [www.uua.org/multiculturalism](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism) or email [multicultural @ uua.org](mailto:multicultural@uua.org) to learn more.

# WORKSHOP 2: YOU ARE HOW YOU'VE LIVED: EXPLORING INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP IDENTITY

## INTRODUCTION

*I sometimes find myself "examining my identity" as other people examine their conscience ... I scour my memory to find as many ingredients of my identity as I can. I then assemble and arrange them. I don't deny any of them. — Amin Maalouf, contemporary Lebanese author, from In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*

Individually and in small and large groups, participants will explore the concept of identity, defined as "something without which you'd miss what being human is for you." Participants will further explore how a person's perspective on a situation or event might be influenced by their experiences and by the various identities they claim.

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Demonstrate how individuals can have common experiences that carry vastly different meanings
- Explore the meaning of "identity"
- Explore how individuals and groups shape and are shaped by their life experiences, or how life experiences shape "identity"
- Introduce the idea that our perspectives on situations and events are shaped by identities we claim.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Discover that different people bring different perspectives on the same experience
- Become familiar with the concept of identity, and deepen their understanding of the concept

through individual, small group, and large group exercises and reflection

- Explore how individuals and groups shape and are shaped by their life experiences, and how life experiences shape "identity"
- Explore how identity shapes perspective on events and experiences.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	10
Activity 1: The Postcard Exercise	25
Activity 2: Naming your Identity	20
Activity 3: Identity Map and Identity Formation	45
Activity 4: Circles of Influence	15
Closing	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read aloud or silently the poem by Rev. Alicia Roxanne Forde which is included as the opening reading for the workshop. What words and images are most powerful for you? How do these words reflect your own reasons for working to bridge "the great divide"? You may wish to write or draw in your journal.

## OPENING (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- List of this workshop's goals
- Covenant established in Workshop 1

### Description of Activity

Light the chalice or invite a participant to light it while you read aloud this poem by Rev. Alicia Roxanne Forde, used with permission:

It feels like We are eyeing one another across a great divide  
A divide I sometimes call:  
"class, race, ethnocentricity, theological perspectives and its implications for  
How We practice, how We live, how We be"  
If you be You and I be Me

If We speak truth in love — with love,  
If We act, related with integrity  
If We unite our spirits ... open, and aching, and  
whole, and wanting, and giving ...  
then  
the work We engage, the communities We  
create, the power of who We can be  
holds a great promise  
a great hope  
for us and our wider communities ... and ... this  
... matters

Invite participants to consider which words and images from the reading are most powerful for them and, if they choose, to share with the group. Remind participants of the spirit of their covenant. Share the goals of this workshop.

## ACTIVITY 1: THE POSTCARD EXERCISE (25 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Postcards or photos cut from magazines with images of people or human activity, one for each pair of participants
- Paper and pens/pencils

### Preparation for Activity

- Obtain postcards for this exercise from an art museum or other local source that has a broad selection OR cut out photographs from magazines. Look for postcards or photographs that show people or human activity and contain many elements to describe. Abstract images or nature scenes do not work well for this exercise. If possible, choose postcards or photographs that represent different world/cultural traditions.

### Description of Activity

Invite participants to move into pairs and give each person a piece of paper and a writing implement. Give each pair a postcard or photograph and ask them not to discuss it just yet. Explain the activity using these or similar words:

Without speaking to your partner, look at the card and write down, literally, what you see in the image. For example: a black chair, a child holding a pencil, and so on.

Allow two or three minutes for writing. Continue:

Still working alone and in silence, look at the card, and imagine the story that the image on the postcard is trying to tell. For example, I see a group of people who are happily celebrating the fall harvest.

Allow two minutes for writing. Next, invite each person to share with their partner the elements they noticed. After

two minutes of sharing, invite partners to share with each other how they interpreted the image, allowing three minutes for this sharing.

Invite participants to turn their attention to the large group and lead a discussion. Begin with these questions:

- What did you notice in the image that your partner missed?
- Are you a big-picture-person, which made it difficult to see the "little things?"
- Did you find yourself interpreting the elements instead of simply describing what you saw?

Continue the conversation with these additional questions:

- How were your interpretations similar to or different from your partner's thoughts?
- How did your frame of reference (i.e., your mood, life experience, etc.) impact how you interpreted the image?
- Given that you and your partner both saw the same image and came to different—or similar—conclusions, what does this say about issues of "perspective?"

Ask participants to hold on to their conclusions as you move to the next exercise.

### Including All Participants

If you have participants who are blind or visually impaired, adapt this exercise by playing a song that includes a story or expression of a deep experience of belonging or not belonging. Ask interpretation questions that are similar to those you asked about the postcards. You may wish to offer both the song activity and the postcard activity as a demonstration of inclusion and appreciating difference.

## ACTIVITY 2: NAMING YOUR IDENTITY (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Participant journals or paper, and pens/pencils

### Preparation for Activity

- Set out paper and pens/pencils.
- Write this quote on newsprint and post:  
Each of us has an original way of being human: each person has his or her own "measure."  
There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's life... This

notion gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life; I miss what being human is for me. — Charles Taylor, cultural philosopher

### Description of Activity

Read the posted quote aloud. Allow 10-15 seconds of silence at the close of the reading.

Explain the activity using these or similar words:

Think about an aspect of your identity— occupation, gender, spouse/partner, ethnicity/race, musician, swimmer, etc.—that, if taken away from you, you'd "miss what being human is for you."

Ask: What is the difference between something that "makes you human" and something that is merely a characteristic, habit, or activity? In other words, what makes for a "real or authentic identity?" Share two examples to clarify:

- A person who plays guitar considers it an enjoyable hobby, but not part of identity. Another considers being a guitarist part of their identity, an important part of what makes them who they are.
- A person with several different ethnic backgrounds, including German, English, and Norwegian, recalls the immigration stories and ethnic cooking of his Norwegian grandparents and considers Norwegian ethnicity a part of identity. However, he does not consider the other ethnicities particularly important to identity.

Ask participants to take five minutes to write down elements of their identity or hold them in your mind.

## ACTIVITY 3: IDENTITY MAP AND IDENTITY FORMATION (45 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Cummings' Identity Map and Worksheet](#) (included in this document)
- Pens/pencils

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for participants.

### Description of Activity

Introduce this activity with these or similar words:

Part of being a culturally competent person is understanding one's own cultural identity and learning how to appreciate the cultural identity of others. With practice, we can learn not to assume that our experience is "normal" or that our point of view is the one against which others' experiences should be measured.

We are going to use a tool developed by Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Dr. Monica Cummings to help ministers identify their own cultural biases and the ways their cultural perspective might differ from that of a person to whom they are providing pastoral care. We'll use the tool to help us lift up and appreciate the cultural differences among the members of this group.

Distribute Handout 1, Cummings' Identity Map and Worksheet and writing implements. Explain the map, point out the example, and, allow time for participants to ask questions. Give participants about 10 minutes to complete their Identity Map worksheet.

Then, have participants rank the identity categories on their worksheet in order of each category's importance in their life, with 1 being most important and 9 being least important. Refer them to the Cummings Identity Map Example.

Then, invite them to move into groups of three and share their maps and rankings with one another. Encourage them to share with one another why they ranked the categories as they did. Allow ten minutes.

Bring the large group back together. Ask participants to share highlights of small group discussions. Lead a discussion with these questions:

- What surprised you about your own map?
- Which category was the most difficult for you to complete?
- What differences did you find in your small group that might suggest differing perspectives?
- What new insights about multicultural competence have emerged for you?

## ACTIVITY 4: CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Participant journals or paper, and pens/pencils

### Description of Activity

Distribute paper and writing implements. Invite participants to consider the influences family, friends, and community have on their own identities. Invite participants to draw their circles of influence on paper or in their journals, offering these directions:

- On a sheet of paper, draw a circle in the center of the page.
- Write the word "me" inside the center of the circle.

- Draw another circle around the center circle. In the space you create, name people who are part of your day-to-day life, your family and friends. As you write each one's name, also write their racial/ethnic identity. If you don't know the racial/ethnic identity of someone in your inner circle, write what you perceive it to be, followed by a question mark.
- Draw another circle outside the first two. Write the names and racial/ethnic identities of people who are not part of your daily life, but are significant influences on your understanding of yourself.
- Outside of all the circles, list influences that surround you: where you live, where you work, where you attend school, groups or clubs to which you belong to, people with whom you share hobbies or interests, etc. Do your best to characterize the racial/ethnic identity of each of those groups.

After the drawings are completed, invite participants to reflect on how their own racial/ethnic identity is influenced by all of the people and groups they named. What insights and observations can they make from doing this exercise? Allow two or three minutes for participants to reflect in silence and/or jot thoughts in their journal.

#### **Including All Participants**

Have a facilitator partner with any participant who is not able to draw. Invite them to tell the facilitator how to fill the circles.

## **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

#### **Materials for Activity**

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [Mattering](#) (included in this document)

#### **Preparation for Activity**

- Copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Practice reading Leader Resource 1 aloud.

#### **Description of Activity**

Distribute Taking It Home and invite participants to do the suggested activities before the next meeting. Read the instructions aloud and invite participants to ask questions.

Read Leader Resource 1, Mattering, and extinguish the chalice.

#### **Including All Participants**

Prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home.

## **LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING**

Take a few moments right after the workshop to ask each other:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do we need to make changes in the way we work together?

## **TAKING IT HOME**

I sometimes find myself "examining my identity" as other people examine their conscience ... I scour my memory to find as many ingredients of my identity as I can. I then assemble and arrange them. I don't deny any of them. — Amin Maalouf, contemporary Lebanese author, from *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*

Share your identity map with trusted friends and family members and invite them to complete one of their own. How does your map and rankings differ from that of others close to you? How is it similar?

Reflect on the family, friends, and community circles you drew, and ask yourself:

- Are my friends, family members and community influences primarily from one ethnic or racial identity group or are there multiple racial and ethnic perspectives represented in my circles?
- If my influences are largely from one group, why is that? Is this something I want to think about changing? How might I go about that?

Respond in your journal, or compose a poem, song, or prayer for yourself or to share.

# HANDOUT 1: CUMMINGS' IDENTITY MAP AND WORKSHEET

The Identity Map was created by Rev. Dr. Monica L. Cummings, influenced by the work of Pamela A. Hays.

Some of our values, beliefs, and behaviors are conscious. We hold others without awareness. The Identity Map is a tool for developing self-awareness related to the cultural influences that have shaped and informed the values, beliefs, and behaviors we use to engage the world.

The Identity Map consists of:

- Year Born/Age—significant cultural influences. For example, for Baby Boomers (born between 1947 and 1961 in the U.S.), a significant cultural influence may have been the Vietnam War. A significant cultural influence for Generation X (born 1961-1972) is computer generated games and text messaging. For an immigrant to the U.S., a significant cultural influence could be living through a civil war or the assassination of a President.
- Geographic Areas Lived, childhood and adult. A sample answer for this element is a person who was raised on a Reservation and now lives in a major urban area.
- National Identity. American, El Salvadorian, Puerto Rican, South Korean, etc. Ethnicity/Race, first language, language spoken at home requires the person to answer the question "What do I want to be called?" for example, Native American or American Indian; Latino/a or Hispanic; Black, or African American, or Caribbean, or Cape Verdean; etc.
- Religious/Spiritual Orientation, childhood and adult. A sample answer for this would be a person who grew up Protestant and now identifies as Unitarian Universalist.
- Socioeconomic Status, childhood and adult. For instance, a person who grew up lower middle class and now is middle to upper middle class, or someone who grew up in the upper class and now identifies as a member of the working class.
- Disabilities includes mental, physical, and acquired disabilities.
- Sexual Orientation includes Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people.
- Gender includes female, male, and transgendered people.

For more about this type of analysis of cultural influences, see the ADDRESSING Framework adapted from P.A. Hays, "Addressing the Complexities of Culture and Gender in Counseling," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 74 (March/April 1996), 332-38 Copyright American Counseling Association.

## Cummings Identity Map Example

Year Born/Age—significant cultural events:

15 years old; Facebook; war protests; text messaging.

**(1)**

Geographic areas lived, childhood/adult:

Live in a suburb outside Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**(6)**

National Identity:

American

**(9)**

Ethnicity/Race, first language, language spoken at home:

White; English is my only language.

**(2)**

Religious/spiritual orientation, childhood/adult:



Believes in something more powerful than humans.

**(4)**

Socioeconomic status, childhood/adult:

Parents are both college graduates.

**(5)**

Disabilities:

None

**(8)**

Sexual Orientation:

Heterosexual.

**(7)**

Gender:

Female

**(3)**

### **Cummings Identity Map Worksheet**

Year Born/Age—significant cultural events:
Geographic Areas Lived, childhood/adult
National Identity:
Ethnicity/Race, first language, language spoken at home:
Religious/Spiritual Orientation, childhood/adult:
Socioeconomic Status, childhood/adult:
Disabilities:
Sexual Orientation:
Gender:

## LEADER RESOURCE 1: MATTERING

Originally written anonymously by a gay high school student and adapted for this exercise.

Mattering

My father asked if I am gay

I asked, Does it matter?

He said, No not really

I said, Yes.

He said get out of my life.

I guess it mattered.

My friend asked why I talk about race so much?

I asked, Does it matter?

He said, No not really

I told him, Yes.

He said, You need to get that chip off your shoulder.

I guess it mattered.

My neighbor asked why I put that ramp up to my front door.

I said, Does it matter?

He said, No not really

I told him because it made my life easier.

He said, Is there a way to make it less obvious?

I guess it mattered.

A member of my church asked why I like gospel music.

I asked, Does it matter?

She said, No, not really.

I told her that it connects me to my southern, Christian childhood.

She said, I think you're in denial about your oppression.

I guess it mattered.

My God asked me, Do you love yourself?

I said, Does it matter?

She said, YES!

I said, How can I love myself? I am gay, Latino, disabled, and a Christian in a hostile climate.

She said that is the way I made you.

Nothing will ever matter again.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

The UUA Multicultural Growth & Witness staff group offers resources, curricula, trainings, and tools to help Unitarian Universalist congregations and leaders

engage in the work of antiracism, antioppression, and multiculturalism. Visit [www.uua.org/multiculturalism](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism) or email [multicultural@uua.org](mailto:multicultural@uua.org) to learn more.

# WORKSHOP 3: DOMINANT CULTURE AND IDENTITY

## INTRODUCTION

*To consider "Whiteness" . . . is not an attack on people, whatever their skin color. Instead, [it] is an attempt to think critically about how white skin preference has operated systematically, structurally, and sometimes unconsciously as a dominant force in American—and indeed in global society and culture. — Dr. Gregory Jay, contemporary author and educator*

This workshop explores what we mean when we talk about culture, or race, or identity. It presents information about racial and ethnic identity formation for white people and for people of color. It invites participants to consider the messages they receive from the dominant culture, and introduces the concept of "white identity," which is likely a new concept for some. The readings, activities, and discussions in this workshop may well lead to emotional reactions, such as defensiveness, guilt, or shame, from participants, particularly participants who identify as White or of European ancestry. Some participants may emphasize that being "color blind"—behaving as if race does not matter—is the solution to racism. Others may use ethnic identity such as being Irish, Italian-, or Polish American, to separate themselves from the burden of White identity. Invite and encourage participants to consider the ways in which White identity is imposed by the larger society. Ask: How do White identity, and the messages we tend to get from our culture about what is "normal" or "good," affect even White people who do not think of themselves as White?

Participants work in two different kinds of small groups in this workshop. In Activity 1, they divide into groups based on their experiences in young adult settings. Activity 4 presents the first instance of meeting in intentionally diverse reflection groups assigned by the facilitators, groups that will meet several times more in the course of the program. Follow the instructions in the program Introduction for creating diverse reflection groups before the workshop begins.

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Define "culture," "race," and "ethnicity"
- Consider the influence of U.S. culture on identity development
- Introduce the concepts of White identity and "Whiteness"
- Present a model identifying stages of racial and ethnic identity formation for White people and People of Color
- Provide a variety of activities and conversations that deepen participants' understanding of Whiteness and its impact on their day-to-day lives.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider definitions of "culture," "race," and "identity"
- Discuss the influence of U.S. culture on identity development
- Explore a model of four stages of racial and ethnic identity formation, and test that model against their own experiences
- Explore Whiteness and White identity
- Understand how Whiteness is normalized in their day-to-day lives and in the culture at large.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	3
Activity 1: Culture and Identity	45
Activity 2: Putting "White" on the Table	15
Activity 3: Racial/Ethnic Identity Formation	25
Activity 4: What Role Has Whiteness Played in Your Life?	25
Closing	2

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

If you are a White person, meditate or journal about how you discovered your "whiteness." What role has Whiteness played in your life?

If you are a Person of Color or from a group marginalized by race or ethnicity, how did you learn about "Whiteness?" How has Whiteness impacted your life?

### OPENING (3 MINUTES)

#### Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1, [Meditations of the Heart](#) (included in this document)
- List of this workshop's goals
- Covenant established in Workshop 1

#### Description of Activity

Light the chalice or invite a participant to light it while you read aloud Leader Resource 1, Meditations of the Heart.

Remind participants of the spirit of their covenant. Share the goals of this workshop.

## ACTIVITY 1: CULTURE AND IDENTITY (45 MINUTES)

#### Materials for Activity

- A computer with Internet access, and a large monitor or a digital projector
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Paper and pens or pencils

#### Preparation for Activity

- Preview [the video](#), The Influence of U.S. Culture on Racial/Ethnic Identity Development, on YouTube. Prepare to show the first 4:07, omitting the section from 3:02 to 3:10. Test equipment immediately before the workshop.
- Write these questions on newsprint, and post them where all participants can see them:
  - What is seen as excellent or desirable in the culture of this setting?
  - What physical attributes are desirable? What skills? What ways of being in the world?

- What is seen as undesirable or to be avoided?

#### Description of Activity

Show the video, pausing at 1:19.

Ask the group to brainstorm definitions and examples of "culture." Record their responses on newsprint. Spend about five minutes on this.

Play the next section of the video and pause at 2:00.

Ask, "How does the provided definition fit with what we brainstormed?" Allow a few minutes for discussion.

By a show of hands, ask how many have experience in the four contexts named in the video. Ask if there are other young adult contexts, settings, or situations they would like to add to the list. Restate the list to reflect the group's additions.

Invite participants to move into groups of four or five, according to the contexts or situations they have experienced and wish to discuss. Invite each group to discuss "culture" as it is manifested in a particular context or situation. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Call attention to the posted questions. Ask the small groups to discuss these questions for 10 minutes while one person records highlights of their conversation on the newsprint.

After 10 minutes, ask each group to post its highlights. Have groups share some highlights of their discussion with the larger group.

Ask, "What is race?" Allow about five minutes for the group to discuss this question.

Restart the video at 2:00, and stop at 3:02. Ask:

- Is the notion that race is a made-up system used to categorize people a new idea for you? How does it change your thinking?
- How does the picture of the twin girls challenge what you previously understood about race?

Show the video from 3:10 to 4:07.

Prompt a discussion on race and ethnicity by posing the following questions:

- The video suggests that "race" is a notion used to divide people, while "ethnicity" is a way of identifying what binds people together. Does this distinction match with your experience?
- How is "race" viewed in U.S. dominant culture? How is "ethnicity" viewed?
- Is either concept important to your understanding of yourself, your friends, and your circle of acquaintances?

## ACTIVITY 2: PUTTING "WHITE" ON THE TABLE (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Putting White on the Table](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with Leader Resource 2.

### Description of Activity

Read the statements in Leader Resource 2, pairing each statement in the left-hand column with its corresponding statement in the right-hand column. Invite participants to monitor their feelings and thoughts as they listen to the statements.

Engage the group in discussion by posing these questions:

- What feelings emerged for you as you heard the list?
- How did the mention of Whiteness change each sentence?
- How would your reaction be different if the word "Asian" or "Latino or Latina" were substituted for "White" in the sentences?
- What do your reactions to this list tell you about the racial assumptions of U.S. dominant culture?

## ACTIVITY 3: RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY FORMATION (25 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Four Stages of Identity Formation: A Model](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Four Stages of White Identity Formation: A Model](#) (included in this document)
- A computer with Internet access, and a large monitor or a digital projector
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Participant journals and writing implements

### Preparation for Activity

- Preview the video, [Introduction to Racial/Ethnic Identity Formation for Young Adults](#) (10:23), on YouTube. Prepare to show it to the group. Test equipment immediately before the workshop.
- Read both handouts and copy them for all participants.

- Write these questions on newsprint, and post them in the room where all participants can see them:
  - What insights did you gain from the information about identity development?
  - What continues to puzzle you?

### Description of Activity

Play the video. Pause after the information about each stage of identity development (at 4:16, 5:35, 7:10, and 8:40). At each pause, ask participants to take a minute to silently consider how their life experience reflects this stage of identity development.

Distribute both handouts. Invite participants to spend some time reflecting in their journals on their own racial identity development. Allow 10 minutes for writing.

## ACTIVITY 4: WHAT ROLE HAS WHITENESS PLAYED IN YOUR LIFE? (25 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Serial Testimony Protocol](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Talking stick or other object for each small group

### Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 3 and prepare to explain the serial testimony process to the group.
- Work with your co-leader to divide participants into reflection groups of about five people. Refer to the guidance provided in the Introduction for ensuring diverse points of view among each group.
- List the members of each group on newsprint, and post the list where all participants can see it.

### Description of Activity

Using the information in Leader Resource 3, explain the serial testimony process. Ask participants to move into the groups you have assigned, explaining that you and your co-facilitator have chosen these groups to mix things up a bit and to ensure that a diversity of perspectives is represented in each group. Ask groups to use the serial testimony protocol to respond to this question: "What role has whiteness played in my life?" Explain that each person will have about four minutes to speak.

Allow about 20 minutes for the small-group discussions. Circulate through the room to monitor whether groups

are following the serial testimony protocol, and offer help or guidance as needed.

## CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Taking It Home for each participant.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Offer Reading 691 from *Singing the Living Tradition* as a closing, and extinguish the chalice.

### Including All Participants

Prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home to offer participants with visual impairment.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few moments right after the workshop to check in with each other. Consider:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do we need to make changes in the way we work together?

## TAKING IT HOME

To consider "Whiteness" . . . is not an attack on people, whatever their skin color. Instead, [it] is an attempt to think critically about how white skin preference has operated systematically, structurally, and sometimes unconsciously as a dominant force in American—and indeed in global society and culture. — Dr. Gregory Jay, contemporary author and educator

As you go about your everyday life, make note of the impact of White identity in your surroundings. In which environments is Whiteness assumed to be the norm? Notice manifestations of Whiteness in your congregation, the place you work or attend school, your grocery store, where you get your hair cut, your neighborhood activities, and so forth. Record your observations in your journal and/or compare notes with another workshop participant.

Obtain and watch the series *Race—The Power of an Illusion* (California Newsreel, 2003) and/or explore [What Is Race?](#) on the PBS website. You can purchase *Race—The Power of an Illusion* from the [California Newsreel website](#) (at [newsreel.org/main.asp](http://newsreel.org/main.asp)) (which also offers a study guide and related resources).

# HANDOUT 1: FOUR STAGES OF IDENTITY FORMATION: A MODEL

This model can be a valuable tool to help people who identify as a Person of Color or as a member of a historically marginalized ethnic group, and those working with them, to better understand identity formation. The limitation of such a model is that human beings are all different and that each of us is constantly evolving and changing. Keep in mind that these stages are meant as guidelines. They are not stagnant but fluid: A person can remain at one stage or move between stages during their lifetime. Take care to use this model neither to label or stereotype individuals nor to generalize about populations to which the model applies.

## Stage 1: Assimilation Stage

This stage is characterized in terms of a person being educated or indoctrinated to believe that the standard of excellence and all that is good is synonymous with the dominant culture. Indoctrination of this message from an early age becomes internalized for many people who learn to believe that the dominant culture is better than their own ethnic or racial group. Consequently, many may prefer teachers, doctors, lawyers, schools, etc. from the dominant culture, while denying the value of professionals of their own ethnic or racial group. People at this stage may experience self-hatred. They may lack awareness of the merit or value of their ethnic group. They may not have an integrated approach to assessing the merit or value of the dominant culture.

Children who are biracial and/or transracially adopted are, at this stage, just becoming aware of their particular racial or ethnic identity. Children of Color who are raised in homogeneous white environments and who assume that they are part of the dominant culture may experience this stage differently than other People of Color and members of historically marginalized ethnic groups, because “they just assumed they were like everyone else. Until they experienced some form of racial prejudice or discrimination from a schoolmate, strangers, or even relatives of their adopted family” (Le, 2012).

## Stage 2: Questioning or Awareness

This stage is usually initiated by a crisis (personal, political, or social) or comment that causes the person to question their beliefs about themselves, comparing what they have been taught with what they actually experience. Through questioning, awareness begins to take root, and the person notices comments, behaviors, and even facial expressions directed toward them that are offensive or hurtful. For example, one Sunday before the morning service, a minister was engaged in conversation with two males, one of European descent

and one Latino. A third male of European descent walked up and asked the Latino to help him move a heavy piece of furniture. A person in the questioning and awareness stage would ask why the male of European descent was not asked to help move the furniture. A person going through this stage begins to reflect on the entirety of their life experiences and usually grows angry—with society, for a lifetime of indoctrination and unequal treatment, and with themselves, for putting up with or not questioning it.

People who are biracial or transracially adopted may experience this stage in particular ways. At this stage a biracial person may become aware that society and possibly family members are forcing them to choose one ethnic or racial group identity and may question why this is so. People of Color who are transracially adopted by people of European descent may, at this stage, become aware that their parents wish to live in a color-blind world, or that the wider circle of people with whom they interact on a daily basis do not live in such a world. Experiences of racism in their communities, schools, and faith communities, and sometimes in their adoptive families, can trigger feelings of isolation and rejection.

## Stage 3: Rejection and Disengagement

This stage is characterized by withdrawal from the dominant culture and immersion in one's own ethnic group culture. For Hispanics, it may mean taking pride in speaking Spanish and not wanting to speak English. For people of Asian descent, it may manifest as wanting to learn more about the culture and history of their ancestral country. People in this stage develop and project a strong connection with their own cultural or ethnic identity. This stage is also marked by anger or rage, as the person begins to address a lifetime of shame and guilt projected onto them by the dominant culture.

For many biracial persons, this stage can bring up feelings of guilt over the possibility of having to reject one parent's culture or ethnicity. Biracial individuals may experience self-hatred based on feeling a need to reject a part of themselves. Transracially adopted people can experience this stage in two ways: They may disengage from their ethnicity of birth and only identify with their adoptive parent's identity, or they may disengage from their adoptive parents' ethnic identity, and seek and take pride in their ethnicity of birth. For both biracial and transracially adopted individuals, this stage is difficult because it usually involves having to reject either a part of themselves or a part of their family.

## Stage 4: Integration and Reengagement

People in this stage have learned from and moved back and forth among the previous stages. They have gone through tremendous personal growth. Their sense of self is more positive, and their connection and attachment to



the world is more secure. They have discovered that their identity can be flexible and fluid, and they have learned to embrace the many paradoxes of everyday living. They are able to discern aspects of the dominant culture that are healthy rather than harmful. They are also willing to be critical of their own ethnic culture. They have integrated the cultures that affect their daily lives, and their attitude toward life is holistic and hopeful.

### **References**

Le, C.N. Le. (May 21, 2012). [Adopted Asian Americans](#). *Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America*.

## **HANDOUT 2: FOUR STAGES OF WHITE IDENTITY FORMATION: A MODEL**

This model can be a valuable tool to help people who identify as White to better understand their identity formation. A limitation of such a model is that human beings are all different and that each of us is constantly evolving and changing. Keep in mind that these stages are meant as guidelines. They are not stagnant but fluid: A person can remain at one stage or move between stages during their lifetime. Take care to use this model neither to label or stereotype individuals nor to generalize about people who identify as White.

### **Stage 1: Pre-Awareness**

This stage is characterized by unawareness of the privileges of White skin. Like fish not knowing that they live in water, White people in the United States can survive without noticing the advantages and privileges that accompany Whiteness. Believing stereotypes about ethnic minorities, and not seeing race or ethnicity—or indeed any cultural differences—are symptoms of this stage.

### **Stage 2: Awareness and Guilt**

This stage is initiated by a personal encounter with a Person of Color (or sometimes with a story in the media) that brings awareness of racism. Feelings of guilt may surface as an individual connects themselves with historical oppression of ethnic minorities by White people, which causes internal discomfort. In this stage, a White person may question their loyalty to Whiteness, which can cause internal conflict as well as conflicts with family and friends.

### **Stage 3: Rejection and Disengagement**

The internal discomfort that surfaced in the previous stage can result in a variety of responses. Some White people try to make themselves feel better by avoiding contact with ethnic minorities. Some White people make an effort to engage with ethnic minorities out of guilt and/or a need to feel good about themselves. Still others try to distance themselves from their Whiteness, such as by rejecting certain privileges that White skin brings.

### **Stage 4: Integration and Reengagement**

In this stage, a healthy White identity is emerging. This stage is characterized by a willingness to be critical of White/dominant culture without self-punishing guilt. People at this stage work in collaboration with others, both White people and ethnic minorities, to resist and transform white privilege and systemic racism, with respect and accountability. There is awareness that moving back and forth between stages is normal.

## **LEADER RESOURCE 1: MEDITATIONS OF THE HEART**

Excerpted from *Meditations of the Heart* by Howard Thurman. Copyright (C) 1953, 1981 by Anne Thurman. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press, Boston, Massachusetts.

It is very easy to pretend to understand what one does not understand. Often the degree to which we oppose a thing marks the degree to which we do not understand it. Sometimes we use our opposition to an idea to cover our own ignorance. We express our dislike for things, sometimes for people, when we do not understand the

things we pretend to dislike, when we do not know the people for whom we have the antagonism.

If I knew you and you knew me,

And each of us could clearly see

By that inner light divine

The meaning of your heart and mine;

I'm sure that we would differ less

And clasp our hands in friendliness,

If you knew me, and I knew you.

## LEADER RESOURCE 2: PUTTING "WHITE" ON THE TABLE

*Read the following sentences aloud in pairs, pausing briefly between the two items in each pair, and pausing again after each pair is read.*

This is my best friend, Mandy.

This is my best white friend, Mandy.

I love green beans.

I love green beans made by that white company Dole Foods.

I live in the neighborhood of Riverside.

I live in the white neighborhood of Riverside.

My husband is an engineer.

My white husband is a white engineer.

The vice president of the United States.

The white vice president of the white United States.

The clerk took my ticket at the gate.

The white clerk took my ticket at the gate.

My son married a lovely woman.

My white son married a lovely white woman.

I graduated at the top of my class.

I'm white, and I graduated at the top of my white class.

## LEADER RESOURCE 3: SERIAL TESTIMONY PROTOCOL

Adapted from the work of Peggy McIntosh and Emily Style.

"Giving testimony" can mean bearing witness, giving evidence, speaking the truth of one's experience and perspective, and claiming responsibility for one's own truth.

The serial testimony protocol is very simple: The facilitator poses a question, and each participant speaks in turn without reaction from other group members. Under other names (Quaker dialogue, Claremont dialogue), this technique has been used for many years, particularly in settings where the participants' perspectives diverge so radically that they have difficulty hearing each other.

This technique does not aim to solve large problems or to create intimacy among participants. The strength of this method is that it challenges participants to speak their own truth while protecting individuals from becoming the focus of discussion. By providing the opportunity for everyone to hear a wide diversity of perspectives, serial testimony can be remarkably effective in building participants' mutual respect.

As simple as this technique is, to many participants it will feel unnatural, especially in settings where they are accustomed to discussion. The facilitator must carefully prepare the group in advance. Ask participants to honor the following ground rules:

Listen to each other with respect, without interrupting to comment or ask questions.

- Speak about your own thoughts, reactions, feelings, and experiences, not those of others.
- During your turn, do not comment on what others have said before you.
- To foster a sense of inclusion, ensure that each participant has the opportunity to speak and that every person keeps to the time allotted for their testimony.

The facilitator might tell the group that they will probably have strong reactions to the process; the facilitator may ask participants to hold on to and reflect on their thoughts and feelings, and assure them there will be ample opportunity to continue dialogue in other settings.

Move systematically around the circle rather than asking for volunteers to speak. The facilitator may pass a talking stick or other object to reinforce the ground rules.

Allow people to pass if they are not ready or do not wish to speak; return to those who pass after everyone else has spoken, to see if they now wish to speak. If someone speaks out of turn, the facilitator can gently but firmly restate the ground rules; otherwise, the facilitator too should refrain from comment.

Closing serial testimony may be done in several ways:

- A minute (or more) of silence
- A minute (or more) for participants to write their reactions
- A few minutes of debriefing about the experience or open discussion in response to an overall question about the workshop.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

The UUA Multicultural Growth & Witness staff group offers resources, curricula, trainings, and tools to help Unitarian Universalist congregations and leaders

engage in the work of antiracism, antioppression, and multiculturalism. Visit [www.uua.org/multiculturalism](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism) or email [multicultural @ uua.org](mailto:multicultural@uua.org) to learn more.

# WORKSHOP 4: WHITENESS AND PRIVILEGE

## INTRODUCTION

*The struggle for racial justice in America calls those of us who are White to make this journey. Our presence is needed. We have been absent too long. — Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, from Soul Work: Anti-racist Theologies in Dialogue, Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones, editors (Boston: Skinner House, 2003)*

This workshop addresses "White privilege," the idea that there exists a system of racial preferences automatically awarded to people who are perceived as White or of European ancestry, while at the same time there is a system of systematic disadvantages for People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity.

Some participants may feel discomfort examining White privilege. Becoming aware of the reality of White privilege, or unearned advantage rooted in racism and White identity, often triggers anger, shame, denial, and resistance, especially for those who identify as White or of European descent. It is important to keep in mind that race-based privilege is not necessarily sought nor enjoyed by those who are its beneficiaries. At the same time, it is impossible to understand or, indeed, transform racial or other identity-based exclusion, inequity, or oppression without addressing privilege. Understanding White privilege is foundational to understanding how racism operates to provide unearned advantage to people who identify as White or of European ancestry at the expense of People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity. Such understanding is necessary to develop the capacity, skills, and motivation to take action to dismantle barriers so that all people "matter" in our congregations, in our organizations, and in our society.

Activity 2 introduces "aesthetic journaling" as a learning strategy to enable participants to go beyond surface dialogue about Whiteness and White privilege. While participants who are visually oriented may be very receptive to this exercise, be ready to encourage those who generally resist art projects to take this opportunity to explore Whiteness using a new lens. To allay concerns about a perceived inability to "do" art, emphasize that this activity's purpose is to engage people with a variety of learning and communication styles; creating art for art's sake is neither a purpose nor a goal.

You may need some time to gather the materials for aesthetic journaling. Begin early and enlist help from others, including workshop participants.

In Activity 3, participants explore strategies for dismantling systems of privilege and oppression by enacting and discussing real-life situations experienced by Unitarian Universalist young adults. For this activity, participants return to the reflection groups you established in Workshop 3.

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce the concepts of "privilege" and "white privilege"
- Introduce "aesthetic journaling" as a way for participants to deepen and personalize their understanding of how Whiteness and privilege are embedded in their day-to-day lives
- Explore strategies participants can use to begin acting to dismantle systems of privilege.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify and define what "privilege" is and how it operates
- Be aware of their own responses to the concept of White privilege
- Arrive at insights about White privilege through individual reflection, aesthetic journaling, and role playing
- Identify ways White privilege manifests in their own life experience and circumstances
- Begin to develop strategies for dismantling privilege when need or opportunity arise.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	2
Activity 1: Introducing White Privilege	15
Activity 2: Aesthetic Journaling on Whiteness and White Privilege	50

Activity 3: Dismantling Privilege Role Play and Discussion 50

Closing 3

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take a few minutes before leading this workshop to consider how unearned privilege accrues in your own life.

Read Handout 1, *White Privilege*. If the concept of privilege is new to you, pay attention to what you think and feel as you read the list. If the concept is not new to you, recall how you felt when first introduced to the concept. Consider how White privilege operates in your life:

- If you are White, what benefits does being part of a culturally privileged group afford you? If you are a Person of Color or are marginalized by race or ethnicity, what disadvantages are connected with being part of your racial or ethnic group?
- Where and when did you notice white privilege in your day-to-day life this week? If you personally experienced White (or light skin) privilege, did you notice when and how it manifests in your daily routines? If your experience is through the lens of a racially or ethnically marginalized group, when and how did you note the impact of White privilege in your life?

Read the explanation of "aesthetic journaling" in Activity 2, and spend some time doing your own aesthetic journaling creation about White identity and White privilege. Reflect on the following questions and write or draw in your journal:

- What story are you telling?
- What questions or wonderings do you now have about the work you've created?
- What did you want to create but could not accomplish?
- What would you like to explore in the future around this idea?

Be fully aware that the concept and reality of White privilege often triggers anger, shame, denial, and resistance, especially among those who identify as White or of European descent. Remind yourself that race-based privilege is not necessarily sought or enjoyed by those who are its beneficiaries. Prepare to lead this workshop by affirming your intention to help participants learn and practice skills that will enhance

their ability to engage in multicultural dialogue and relationships.

## OPENING (2 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- List of this workshop's goals
- Covenant established in Workshop 1

### Description of Activity

Light the chalice or invite a participant to light it while you offer these words from the Roman philosopher Seneca:

It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.

Remind participants of the spirit of their covenant. Share the goals of this workshop.

## ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCING WHITE PRIVILEGE (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [White Privilege](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Write the following questions on newsprint, and post where they will be visible to all participants:
- What is my response to the handout?
- How does White privilege appear in my life (as a White person or as a person from a racially or ethnically marginalized group)?

### Description of Activity

Introduce the activity by reminding participants that this workshop will focus on white privilege. Read the following passage:

"White privilege" is a system of racial preference automatically awarded to people who identify as White or of European ancestry, while at the same time there is a system of systematic disadvantages for People of Color and other people marginalized by race or ethnicity.

Acknowledge that participants may feel resistance or discomfort as they examine White privilege, and affirm the importance of the work they are about to do together



as part of the process of transforming exclusion, inequities, and oppression based on race or ethnicity.

Distribute Handout 1 and invite participants to read it. Ask participants to move into groups of three and discuss the handout, using the posted questions to guide them.

After 10 minutes, gather the group and invite participants to briefly share any insights from their triad conversations.

## **ACTIVITY 2: AESTHETIC JOURNALING ON WHITENESS AND WHITE PRIVILEGE (50 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Participant journals
- A variety of writing materials
- Index cards, four per participant
- A large variety of found objects, such as fabric, mechanical parts, string, rope, buttons, cotton balls, foam letters and shapes, magazines, plastic bags, construction paper, discarded CDs or records, packets of salt, comic books, feathers, or discarded maps
- Timepiece (minutes)

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Assemble enough found objects for each participant to choose several. Be as wild, varied, and random as possible in your choice of materials. The more varied the collection, the more imaginative participants can be.
- Arrange the found objects on several tables to avoid congestion when participants make their selections.
- Arrange the meeting room so participants have enough table space and seating to make their artworks.
- Write the heading "Another Responds to the Creation" on newsprint, and list these questions below the heading:
  - What do you see? (Example: a blue button, the letter "A")
  - What story does the creation tell? (Example: It tells a story about someone with a broken heart.)
  - What questions does this creation raise for you?

- Write the heading "The Artist Speaks" on newsprint, and list these questions below the heading:
  - What story are you telling?
  - What questions or wonderings do you now have about the work you've created?
  - What did you want to create but could not accomplish?
  - What ideas came up during your creation process that you would like to explore in the future?

### **Description of Activity**

Introduce the activity using these or similar words:

"Aesthetic journaling" is a strategy that will help deepen your perspective and understanding about Whiteness, which is a complicated and layered experience. It combines the benefits of journaling—looking inward and taking notes on one's personal experience—and aesthetics, which for this purpose is the idea of using one's imagination to create an alternative insight into a problem. You may welcome the opportunity to engage in artistic expression, or you may not. Even if you are one who generally resists creating artwork, I invite you to experience this opportunity to explore Whiteness from a new perspective and with a different lens. The purpose of the activity is not to create art for art's sake, but to engage people with different learning and communication styles. Using alternative means of expression can help us all learn about and appreciate difference and may lead to insights beyond what dialogue can provide.

Give each participant two index cards and a pen or pencil. Explain the process as follows, referring to the collection of found objects as you speak:

You are invited to use these found objects to create a response to the notion of Whiteness. We're going to discover how aesthetic journaling works by doing a practice creation. Choose three or four objects that appeal to you from those displayed. This is only a practice, so make your selections quickly.

Allow two minutes for participants to make their selections. Continue with these instructions:

Using the objects you chose, make a statement about texture. In other words, arrange the items in multiple ways to show variations of texture—smooth, rough, grainy, rigid, patterns of texture, and so on. Include the index cards in whatever way you wish. Remember, this exercise is more

about deeper understanding than about making art. It's about the process, not the product.

Allow five minutes for participants to make their practice creations.

Ask three or four volunteers to share what they believe their choices say about texture. Invite them to return their objects to the table.

Distribute two additional index cards to each participant. Invite participants to consider the conversations, reflections, and presentations about Whiteness they have experienced over the course of this program and to choose one word, phrase, or image that captures their imagination or resonates with their own growing understanding of Whiteness. Invite them to organize their thoughts by writing or drawing in their journals and then to proceed as they did with the texture exercise: Use objects to create a representation of their chosen word, image, or phrase that says something about Whiteness.

Allow 20 minutes for participants to do their aesthetic journaling. At intervals, alert participants of the time they have remaining to complete their work.

Invite participants to turn to a person sitting near them. If there is an uneven number of people, pair one person with a facilitator. Explain the activity in these words or your own:

Pairs will focus on each creation in turn. The artist is invited to remain quiet while the other person talks about the creation, using the questions posted on newsprint. The artist may make notes about these questions or observations, but the artist is not to respond at this point—nor is the artist obligated to respond to the questions and observations at all. After three minutes, the artist is invited to break their silence and share with their partner, responding to the "artist speaks" questions posted on newsprint. The artist will have five minutes to respond, before the pair turns its attention to the other creation.

Monitor time carefully, alerting people at appropriate intervals to move to the next part of the process.

### **Including All Participants**

Because found objects are three-dimensional, a person with visual impairment should still be able to create a work of art.

Be sure that aisles and pathways are free of clutter so all participants can move freely while selecting objects. If anyone in the workshop cannot move to the table(s), place 8 to 10 objects on a tray and bring it to them.

## **ACTIVITY 3: DISMANTLING PRIVILEGE ROLE PLAY AND DISCUSSION (50 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 2, [Dismantling Privilege](#) (included in this document)
- Handouts 3, 4, 5, and 6, [Privilege Scenarios 1—4](#) (included in this document)
- List of reflection group assignments (Workshop 3)

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Copy Handout 2 for all participants.
- Review the scenarios and discussion questions in Handouts 3, 4, 5, and 6 and select the ones you will use. This activity works best if participants are able to watch and discuss two or three presentations. If you have more than three small groups (reflection groups formed in Workshop 3), plan to divide the group, and secure two or more different spaces for presentation and discussion.
- Make enough copies of the scenarios you have selected so every member of a small group can have a copy of their group's scenario.

### **Description of Activity**

Distribute Handout 2 and read it aloud. Invite participants to return to the reflection groups they formed in Workshop 3 to practice using the three-step process for dismantling privilege described on the handout, using role play.

Assign each reflection group a scenario, and give each group copies of the appropriate handout. Tell groups that they have 15 minutes to assign roles, run through the scenario, and use the provided questions to prepare to lead a discussion of the scenario and how the three-step process might be applied to this situation. Give groups time to do their work.

Ask each small group to present the scenario to the larger group and to lead a discussion using the questions on Handout 2.

## **CLOSING (3 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [Living Wide Open](#) (included in this document)

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Practice Reading Leader Resource 1 aloud.

## Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home and read the instructions aloud. Encourage participants to ask questions. Invite participants to do the suggested activities before the next meeting. Offer Leader Resource 1 as a closing, and extinguish the chalice.

## Including All Participants

If any participants are visually impaired, prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few moments right after the workshop to check in with each other. Consider:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do we need to make changes in the way we work together?

## TAKING IT HOME

The struggle for racial justice in America calls those of us who are White to make this journey. Our presence is needed. We have been absent too long. — Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, from *Soul Work: Anti-racist Theologies in Dialogue*, Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones, editors (Boston: Skinner House, 2003)

As you go about your normal routines, take mental notes of how you see White privilege at work. You will likely notice White privilege in places where the majority of people appear Caucasian. If you yourself have white or light skin, make note of how this privilege characterizes your daily routines. If your experience is through the lens of a racially or ethnically marginalized group, make note of how White privilege operates and its impact in your life.

Consider how, if at all, you contribute to the system of White privilege.

Deepen your skills and your capacity to identify and respond to white privilege when you encounter it in your day-to-day life. Make it a spiritual practice to ask yourself the questions from Handout 2 when you encounter or observe privilege in action. Record your

responses in your journal and/or talk them over with a friend or family member. Also be mindful of your own feelings of guilt, shame, or powerlessness when and if those feelings arise. Record them in your journal or otherwise take note of them. Does practicing your skills for dismantling privilege affect how you feel when you notice a manifestation of privilege?

## HANDOUT 1: WHITE PRIVILEGE

Adapted from a piece originally published in *Weaving the Fabric of Diversity* (Boston: UUA, 1996).

If I am a White person in America:

I can turn on my television or watch a movie and see many images of people of my race in a wide variety of roles, including many positive and heroic ones.

I can apply for a car loan and know that I will not be turned down because of my race.

I can apply for a small business loan and know that I will not be turned down because of my race.

I can search for an apartment to rent and know that no properties will be withheld from my consideration because of my race.

I am surrounded by images that suggest that God and other Biblical figures are White like me.

I will learn in school that the history of our country is largely the history of my people written from the perspective of people of my race.

I can walk into virtually any pharmacy or similar retail store and find cosmetics and hair care products appropriate for my skin and hair.

I am unlikely ever to be asked to speak for my race.

It is unlikely that I will ever be in a situation where I am the only person of my race.

I can browse in a store without being followed or arousing suspicion because of my race.

I will never be stopped, frisked, arrested, or abused by police solely because a person of my race is a suspect in a crime in the area.

I can be hired for a job and not have co-workers assume I was hired because of racial preference or affirmative action.

## **HANDOUT 2: DISMANTLING PRIVILEGE**

### **Steps for Dismantling Privilege**

- Step 1: NAME IT! Grapple with understanding of what privilege is and how it works in everyday life.
- Step 2: DEAL WITH IT! Identify privilege, address it, and take some personal responsibility for not allowing it to continue.
- Step 3: REFRAME IT! Build new roles, practices, shared values, and relationships with others to counteract privilege.

### **Questions to Consider**

- Who is advantaged or privileged?
- How do I contribute to this form of privilege?
- What are some new roles or practices that would not allow this manifestation of privilege to continue?
- What are the risks for each person or group in this proposed new scheme of things? What are the benefits?

## HANDOUT 3: PRIVILEGE SCENARIO

### 1

*This scenario explores the intersections of race, class, and gender. It takes place in the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn, New York. Two police officers have stopped two people in a car on Nostrand Avenue and Bergen Street. After some time, a passerby interrupts the situation.*

#### CAST

- Officer Smith, a uniformed White officer from Brooklyn in his late 30s
- Officer Johnson, a uniformed Black officer from Queens in his late 20s
- Sarah, a Black, masculine-presenting female dressed in baggy, fashionable men's clothing, including a large hoodie and a fitted baseball cap; she is from the suburbs of Virginia and is college-educated and from a middle class background
- Jimmy, a Black trans man wearing a short-sleeved T-shirt and fitted jeans; he is from the suburbs of Long Island and is college-educated and from a middle class background
- Carl, a young Black man from Crown Heights, wearing fitted jeans and a baggy hoodie; he is from a working class background and will attend community college next year

#### SCENARIO

*Jimmy is parked outside of a grocery store, while Sarah goes in to pick up a few things. When Sarah returns to the car and they start to drive away, a police car with two officers pulls them over.*

**Officer Johnson:** License and registration, please.

**Jimmy:** Yes, sir.

*Officer Smith is on the other side of the car and tells Sarah to roll her window down. Jimmy hands the officer his license and registration. Officer Johnson looks at Jimmy's license with confusion and then at Jimmy with frustration.*

**Johnson:** Is this your ID? Are you a man or a woman?! Get out of the car! Now!

*Jimmy gets out of the car.*

**Jimmy** (*shakily but politely*): Officer, can you please tell me what I have done wrong, sir?

*Officer Johnson looks at Jimmy with confusion and pauses.*

**Officer Johnson:** You and your buddy here match the description of two perps we're looking for. What are you two doing out here?

**Sarah:** We're just picking up some items for a sick friend from the grocery store.

**Officer Smith** (*surprised and confused by Sarah's high-pitched voice*): Look, s—, m—, ma'am (*he stumbles*), there was a violent robbery 10 minutes from here, and you two fit the description—but we're looking for two . . . men.

**Sarah:** Officer, we've been at this grocery store for the past half-hour or so.

**Officer Johnson:** Smith, I don't think these ladies are who we're looking for.

*Just as the police are about to tell Jimmy and Sarah that they can go, Sarah's upstairs neighbor, Carl, walks by. Carl recognizes Sarah and is immediately aware and wary. He knows how often black and brown people get stopped and frisked "randomly" in his neighborhood.*

**Carl:** Hey, Sarah, everything all right?

*Both officers turn their attention to Carl.*

**Officer Smith:** Looks like we got another suspect, Johnson.

**Officer Johnson:** Hey, you! Get over here!

**Carl:** Hey, man, I'm not causing any trouble. I'm just looking out for my girl here. I'll be on my way if everything's fine.

*Carl starts to walk away.*

**Officer Smith:** Do not make any further moves!

*Both officers walk over to Carl and corner him.*

**Carl:** I haven't done a damn thing. You have no reason to stop me.

**Officer Johnson** (*into his police radio*): We have another suspect. Tall, Black male in dark hoodie. Calling for back-up.

**Carl:** Hold up! I haven't done anything!

*Carl tries to edge his way out of the corner into which the two officers have blocked him.*

**Officer Smith:** You better shut up, young man, before we book you for resisting arrest.

*Officer Johnson grabs Carl's arm. Sarah and Jimmy have been watching this change in events with a delayed sense of shock.*

**Jimmy:** Hey, officer, I don't want to interrupt, but Carl is a friend of ours. He was just trying to make sure we were okay.

**Officer Johnson:** Look, you should keep quiet. Your ID doesn't match you. Mind your own business, or we can take you down to the precinct, too.

**Sarah** (*takes off her hat and says in a sweet voice, purposefully more feminine*): Officer, I'm sorry to interrupt. We don't mean to be rude. We're just getting food for our sick friend, and Carl is my neighbor and dear friend. He's just looking out for us girls.

*Officer Johnson and Officer Smith look at each other, a little confused.*

**Officer Smith:** All right, all right.

*He radios in to forget about the back-up.*

**Officer Johnson:** You ladies need to be careful out here. And you (*to Carl*)—you need to mind your own business. You're lucky these ladies can vouch for you.

*With deep sighs of relief, Sarah and Jimmy get back into their car. Carl nods his thanks to Sarah and quickly walks away.*

### **SCENARIO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why do you think the police let Jimmy, Sarah, and Carl go?
2. How have each individual's class, gender, and race possibly played into how they were treated? How do perceived gender and class backgrounds of individuals affect how they are treated?
3. Name some parts of your own identity. How do these aspects of yourself gain/deny you privileges to the "justice" system? What are your experiences with officers of the law?
4. What did individuals do in this scenario that helped name, reframe, or dismantle systems of privilege and oppression? What else might they have done?
5. What Unitarian Universalist values and Principles are helpful in responding to situations like this?

## HANDOUT 4: PRIVILEGE SCENARIO

### 2

By Nora Rasman, a White Unitarian Universalist.

*This scenario concerns the recent, major increase of gentrification and forced relocation within Washington, D.C. It presents some of the challenges, miscommunications, and missed opportunities that are created with rapid economic growth and that fail to take into account the majority of residents. The scenario includes people born and raised in D.C. as well as people who have relocated to the city for work and/or school. Names were chosen from the Bible so as to not identify characters by race or ethnicity.*

*The scenario begins on the 14th Street NW bus, where two conversations are happening. It ends at a coffee shop in Columbia Heights.*

#### CAST

- Adam, early 30s, lives in the U Street area and directs a local nonprofit. He moved to D.C. right after high school for a job and is interested in staying in the city permanently.
- Bethany, late 20s, lives in Columbia Heights and works for the D.C. government. Bethany was born and raised in D.C. After completing undergraduate and graduate studies away from D.C., Bethany is unsure whether she wants to stay in the city.
- Cain, late 20s, lives in the Mt. Pleasant area and works in food service. Cain moved to D.C. after completing his undergraduate studies and plans to move elsewhere for graduate studies within six months.
- Daniel, mid-30s, is working to complete a college degree while working at a retail store. Born and raised in D.C., Daniel currently lives in Hyattsville and would like to move back to D.C.
- Esther, early 40s, was born and raised in D.C., currently lives in the Takoma neighborhood of D.C., and plans to stay in D.C. permanently. Esther completed undergraduate and graduate school in D.C. and now works as a professor.

#### SCENARIO

*The scenario opens on a bus heading north on 14th Street NW. Adam is sitting near the front of the bus. Cain and Esther get on the bus at P Street and sit down together.*

**Cain:** Again, I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me. Having a better understanding of D.C.'s history is really important. I have loved living in this city,

but I'm really ready to move on. I've been here for four years already! I can't believe it.

**Esther:** Yeah. Well, I'm glad you've enjoyed your time here, and I'm glad we had a chance to sit down and talk. The city has really changed since I grew up here.

**Cain:** There is definitely a lot of new development going on around my neighborhood. I'm really excited about the new services coming in. We have grocery stores within two blocks of my home in every direction. And I heard they're opening another yoga studio.

*Overhearing the conversation between Cain and Esther, Adam jumps into the conversation.*

Adam: You know, people in the neighborhood were asking for grocery stores for the past few decades. And they are only now being built.

Cain: It's probably because of all the new people moving in. We've made it very clear to our Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner that we need more amenities in our community.

**Adam:** I highly doubt that. People in the neighborhood have been approaching the City Council for years without any changes. I think developers and local government wanted to encourage a specific type of people moving in.

**Esther:** Yes, I agree. There is a very specific type of development going on in the city. And it doesn't take into account the needs of all the District's residents.

**Cain:** I've heard that gentrification is a really big problem throughout D.C. I just don't get why people are taking it so personally. It's not like *I'm* the reason that people aren't living in the same neighborhoods any more.

**Adam:** That's exactly the issue. Most people with some money who choose to move someplace don't think that they are *personally* contributing to the displacement of established urban communities. The gentrification economic development model has been happening in D.C. for decades. Gentrification makes it really hard for businesses that are owned by people of color or locals to compete.

**Cain:** Hmm. Well, hopefully this won't be such a big issue in the city I move to when I go to graduate school in the fall.

**Esther:** If you look into the history and current patterns of community displacement in urban areas around the United States, you'll find that gentrification is not just happening in D.C.

**Cain:** I've been reading some blogs about urban planning and gentrification, but I will definitely look into it further.



*A few rows back on the bus, another conversation is happening.*

**Daniel** (*on the phone*): No, but have you seen the number of buildings they are putting up on 14th Street? It doesn't even make sense. They have a new condo building coming to the corner of 14th and U. I feel sorry for whoever is going to be living there. [pause] ... Yup, I'm on my way to the store. I'll call you later, 'bye.

*The bus stops at 14th Street and Columbia Road. Adam, Cain, Daniel, and Esther all get off the bus. Daniel walks to a coffee shop.*

**Adam** (*to Cain and Esther*): Well, have a good afternoon, you two.

**Esther**: You as well.

**Cain** (*smiles*): Thanks again for your time, Professor. I'll definitely stay in touch.

**Esther**: Have a good afternoon, Cain.

*Cain and Esther hug goodbye. Esther walks to the coffee shop. Adam, Bethany, and Daniel are seated at three separate tables near each other.*

**Esther** (*to Adam*): Funny seeing you again. That person really made me think about how we talk about displacement in D.C.

**Adam**: Same here. I'm not from here, but I've been doing grassroots organizing for about 15 years, and the city has without a doubt changed a great deal. I don't get how people don't see it.

**Daniel**: I think I heard you two talking on the bus. Yes, there has been some serious change in the area. Look at us sitting here drinking coffee. There are so many people in this coffee shop, it took me 20 minutes to get a beverage.

**Bethany** (*to Adam, Daniel, and Esther*): Sorry to be so nosy, but I couldn't help overhearing your conversation. You were talking about the changes here in D.C.?

**Esther**: Yes ...?

**Bethany**: I'm really concerned, too. I'm a D.C. native, and I was lucky enough to go away for school. I now work in the Mayor's Office, and I'm heading up a task force between community groups and businesses. We know that a lot of development contracts have been given out without community benefits agreements being signed, and we want to change that.

**Daniel**: I'm all for community benefits. But it's my understanding that even though the agreements are supposed to be legally binding, the city lacks any enforcement mechanism. Like at the new development on top of the T Street METRO station—the agreement just plain wasn't followed.

**Bethany**: I'm not familiar with that specific agreement, but maybe Felix in my office has more information. Would you mind giving me your contact information? I would be happy to pass it along to Felix.

**Daniel**: Sure. Here's my card. Actually, I've spoken to Felix about it several times. But sure, go ahead and give him my information.

**Adam**: If you could give Felix my contact info too, I'd really appreciate it.

**Bethany**: No problem. Have a great day!

*Bethany and Adam turn back to their coffee; Esther and Daniel continue to speak, their voices low.*

**Esther**: Some of these young folks, even the ones who are trying to help the communities in D.C.—they don't know how much things have changed due to gentrification.

**Daniel**: I agree. I grew up just down the street from here. My family got priced out years ago, and I've been trying to move back ever since.

## SCENARIO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What systems of privilege and discrimination are operating in the scenario?
2. Have you had similar conversations about gentrification or faced similar situations? How have you responded?
3. Are there ways in which you might have perpetuated systems of power and privilege, oppression and marginalization when choosing a place to live? Are there ways in which you have acted to name, reframe, and dismantle such these systems?
4. What did individuals do in this scenario that helped name, reframe, or dismantle systems of privilege and oppression? What else might they have done?
5. What Unitarian Universalist values and Principles are helpful in responding to situations like this?

## HANDOUT 5: PRIVILEGE SCENARIO

### 3

Written by India McKnight, a Black Unitarian Universalist.

*This scenario is set at a Unitarian Universalist congregation. For the first time ever, the congregation is hosting a youth conference with the theme of "Homelessness and LGBTQ Youth." The majority of the attendees, congregational leaders, and guest workshop leaders are youth. There are also adults in attendance to support the youth. As this youth conference takes place, a group of adults from the congregation who are not connected to the conference are meeting in the congregation's library. The scenario presents an interaction that includes one of the guest presenters, a conference attendee who is a youth, and an adult attending the meeting in the library.*

#### CAST

- Danielle, a young Black lesbian who is attending the conference
- Myles, a young mixed-race transgender man who is a conference presenter
- John, an older White cisgender man who is attending the meeting in the library ("Cisgender" refers to people who are not trans or gender-variant—in other words, people whose gender identities, presentations, and behavior "match" the sex they were assigned at birth.)

#### SCENARIO

**Danielle:** Thank you so much for coming to the youth conference, Myles.

**Myles:** I'm glad you invited me. I so rarely get to be around other young people and talk about my experience as a transgender man.

**Danielle:** We should be heading upstairs soon. Do you need anything before we do?

**Myles:** I'd like some water, and I need to go to the bathroom,

*Danielle and Myles enter the kitchen to get the water. Danielle then shows Myles where the bathrooms are. There is a women's room, a men's room, and a single-stall, handicap-accessible bathroom. Someone is in the single-stall bathroom.*

**Danielle:** The men's bathroom also has a single stall.

**Myles:** Thanks, I'll use that one.

*As Myles turns to enter the men's room, John is coming out of the men's room and grabs the doorknob to prevent Myles from entering.*

**John:** Excuse me, young lady, there is a women's room.

**Myles:** Sir, I'm not a lady, and I need to use the restroom.

**John:** That's why there is a women's bathroom. You can't use *this* restroom.

**Danielle:** Sir, Myles needs to go to the bathroom, and he isn't a woman. Myles is a man.

**John:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

*John leaves the bathrooms to return to his meeting. Myles finishes using the restroom. Danielle is waiting for him outside.*

**Danielle:** I'm so sorry about that, Myles. I can't believe that happened. Some members of our congregation are having a meeting in the library—he isn't part of the conference.

**Myles:** Yeah, I don't know what his problem was, but it happens all the time. In fact, what just happened is what I was going to talk with the other youth about. There is a law in this city that allows trans folks to use whatever bathroom they choose. It's important for queer youth to know about this, as they are often stopped by the police.

**Danielle:** Is there anything I can do?

**Myles:** Nope. Let's get upstairs. I'm ready to speak.

#### SCENARIO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who has privilege to access the restroom(s) of their choice in the scenario? Why does that person have privilege? How did they use their privilege?
2. What role (if any) did race or ethnicity play in who had privilege? What role (if any) did age play in who had privilege?
3. Who played the role of an ally in the story? What is the role of an ally? When have you had the opportunity to act as an ally?
4. Why did John say "Yeah, yeah, yeah" and walk away? When have you acted or experienced someone acting in a similarly dismissive way?
5. What did individuals do in this scenario that helped name, reframe, or dismantle systems of privilege and oppression? What else might they have done?
6. What Unitarian Universalist values and Principles are helpful in responding to situations like this?

## HANDOUT 6: PRIVILEGE SCENARIO

### 4

By Jessica York, a Black Unitarian Universalist and Youth Programs Director at the UUA.

#### CAST

- Lexie, a White bookstore manager. She is one of three manager/trainers in the company. She has decades of sales experience, though she has only been in books for three years. She currently manages a small mall bookstore that is part of a chain.
- Donna, a White district manager for the bookstore chain. She has been in this position for less than a year. Previously, she managed a small mall bookstore location.
- Rachel, a Black bookstore manager. She is one of three manager/trainers in the company. She has been in retail bookstore management for 10 years. She has managed small mall locations and a superstore for this company.

#### SCENARIO

*Rachel picks up the phone and makes a call. Lexie answers.*

**Rachel:** Hi, Lexie. How is everything?

**Lexie (sighs):** Too much work and too little time, as always.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I know. Do you have time to talk about our upcoming training in Macon? We should decide who is going to train the manager and who will train the employees.

**Lexie:** Can I call you back later? Donna, our district manager, is in the store right now.

**Rachel:** Sure, I'll be at the store until closing. Talk to you later.

*Three hours later, Lexie picks up the phone and makes a call. Rachel answers.*

**Lexie:** Hi, Rachel. Sorry it took so long for me to call back. Donna just left.

**Rachel:** Wow. That was a long visit. I didn't know you were due for a store visit. Wasn't she just out there last week?

**Lexie:** Yes. She likes to hang out here. I don't know why. I think *she* thinks we're buddies or something. She hardly spends any time on the floor—she just sits back in the office, smoking and cracking "You might be a redneck if . . ." jokes that I don't even find funny. She might identify as a redneck, but I don't.

**Rachel:** So, how long was she there?

**Lexie:** Almost all day. It makes it hard to get work done, though I did get a free lunch out of it.

**Rachel:** Really? She never takes me out to lunch.

**Lexie:** Well, she wanted to get out of the store to tell me about two new superstores that are opening in our area. They need managers, and she wanted to know if I was interested. Are you applying?

**Rachel:** I didn't know there were two new stores opening.

**Lexie:** Yeah, they haven't announced them yet. Donna wanted to give me the jump. I put in my bid for Clearwater. It's in a new mall that is a lot closer to my house than where I am now. And, of course, it's a superstore, so the pay will be much better. She says I can stay on as a training store manager, too. You should bid for the other store.

**Rachel:** I might do that, Lexie. Thanks for telling me. I'm going to call Donna and ask about it.

#### SCENARIO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What systems of privilege and discrimination are operating in this scenario?
2. Who has privilege? Why does that person have privilege? How did they use their privilege in this scenario?
3. What real effect does privilege have on the people in this scenario, even if the privilege is not sought? Have you ever had an experience where you were the beneficiary of privilege you did not seek?
4. What role did the "redneck" jokes play in this scenario?
5. How could Lexie have responded to this situation in a way that helped name, reframe, and dismantle systems of privilege and oppression?
6. What Unitarian Universalist values and Principles are helpful in responding to situations like this?

## LEADER RESOURCE 1: LIVING WIDE OPEN

Material excerpted from the book *I Will Not Die an Unlived Life* copyright (C) 2000 by Dawna Markova Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC, Newburyport, MA and San Francisco, CA [www.redwheelweiser.com](http://www.redwheelweiser.com).

I will not die an unlived life.

I will not live in fear

of falling or catching fire.

I choose to inhabit my days,

to allow my living to open me,

to make me less afraid,

more accessible,

to loosen my heart

until it becomes a wing,

a torch, a promise.

I choose to risk my significance,

to live so that which came to me as a seed

goes to the next as a blossom,

and that which came to me as a blossom,

goes on as fruit.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

The UUA Multicultural Growth & Witness staff group offers resources, curricula, trainings, and tools to help Unitarian Universalist congregations and leaders

engage in the work of antiracism, antioppression, and multiculturalism. Visit [www.uua.org/multiculturalism](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism) or email [multicultural @ uua.org](mailto:multicultural@uua.org) to learn more.

# WORKSHOP 5: VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES

## INTRODUCTION

*Whatever any of us concludes about race relations, we should start by including all of us.*  
— Frank Wu, author of *Yellow*

This workshop marks the beginning of the second half of the program. There is considerable flexibility to account for different presentation schedules. Activity 1 is a re-entry activity, useful primarily if your group has been apart for some period of time. Activity 2 provides video clips of People of Color and White-identified people offering perspectives on race, theology, and personal and community practices. Activity 3 provides instructions for racial/ethnic identity-based reflection groups. Alternate Activity 1, which considers cultural misappropriation in a well-loved Unitarian Universalist hymn, can be included if you eliminate Activity 1.

Up to this point in the program, participants have had many opportunities to share their stories across racial/ethnic groups. In this workshop, participants have a chance to talk about race and privilege in a structured format with persons from their own ethnic/racial group, an opportunity that is rare, even for those who regularly participate in multicultural dialogues. This kind of within-group talk more often than not generates a different type of conversation, both in tone and content, than does multicultural dialogue. In racial affinity groups, White-identified people are able to ask questions and raise issues without the fear of offending People of Color and other ethnically or racially marginalized people. People socialized in ethnically or racially oppressed groups find that they can talk about issues without the burden of rationalizing and proving the validity of their experience to White people.

In this program, the racial identity group in which an individual participates is based on how they self-identify. Neither you nor other workshop participants assign anyone a racial/ethnic category. Invite and encourage each person to speak from their individual experience and to note both common and unique experiences living in a race-based society.

Note: Although it is strongly recommended that groups in Activity 3 be formed on the basis of racial/ethnic identity, there are situations where, due to the lack of diversity in the group, small size of the group, or lack of maturity of participants, formation of such groups is not

appropriate. For such cases, participants should gather in the reflection groups established in Workshop 3.

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore further how Whiteness is normalized in participants' day-to-day lives
- Highlight the voices and theological perspectives of several Unitarian Universalist leaders reflecting on Whiteness, race, and ethnicity
- Provide a process for racial/ethnic identity-based groups to reflect on their experiences

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Share life experiences that provide examples of racism as a system.
- Hear some of the voices and perspectives of Unitarian Universalists from racially or ethnically marginalized groups and White-identified people who struggle against racism
- Share reflections and experiences with others through racial/ethnic identity-based caucusing.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Sharing Reflections on Whiteness	20
Activity 2: Voices and Perspectives	30
Activity 3: Race-based reflection groups	60
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: We'll Build a Land	20
Alternate Activity 2: About Two UU Black Kids	40

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider interactions, relationships, and friendships you have had with people of a different race or ethnicity from your own. What did you learn from others? What broader perspectives did you gain? Were there things

that you wish you had known or that you wish you had done/said differently? If there is/was a connection between you and another across racial/ethnic boundaries, what approaches or attitudes on both of your parts made the connection possible?

Write your responses in your journal or share them with your co-facilitator or a trusted conversation partner.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- List of this workshop's goals
- Covenant established in Workshop 1

### Description of Activity

Light the chalice or invite a participant to light it while you read these words from Rebecca Parker aloud.

It is not enough to think of racism as a problem of "human relations," to be cured by me and others like me treating everyone fairly, with respect and without prejudice. Racism is more: It is a problem of segregated knowledge, mystification of facts, anesthetization of feeling, exploitation of people, and violence against the communion/community of our humanity. My commitment to racial justice is both on behalf of the other—my neighbor, whose well-being I desire—and for myself, to whom the gift of life has been given but not yet fully claimed. I struggle neither as a benevolent act of social concern nor as a repentant act of shame and guilt, but as an act of desire for life, of passion for life, of insistence on life—fueled by both love for life and anger in face of the violence that divides human flesh.

Remind participants of the spirit of their covenant.

Share the goals of this workshop.

## ACTIVITY 1: SHARING REFLECTIONS ON WHITENESS (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Talking stick or other object

### Description of Activity

Invite participants to share thoughts or observations they have had about Whiteness since the last workshop. Ask these or similar questions:

- Did you notice anything in day-to-day life that added to your understanding about White identity?
- What did you see or experience? How did it make you feel? Did you behave differently?
- What are the implications for you now?

Invite participants to share their observations and reflections one person at a time. Pass the talking stick or object to each speaker in turn, so that only one speaks at a time. Ask participants to practice simply listening to one another, and to refrain from questioning, clarifying, affirming, or challenging another's observations or comments.

## ACTIVITY 2: VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES (30 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Computer with projector and speakers
- Participant journals and writing implements

### Preparation for Activity

- Download the video "Theological Wings." Locate these excerpts: Kat Liu sharing an excerpt from *A People So Bold* ("[Theological Wings](#)," 9:38–11:38); Sharon Welch and Rob Hardies sharing an excerpt from *A People So Bold* ("[Theological Wings](#)," 14:14–16:39), and Taquiena Boston sharing an excerpt from *A People So Bold* ("[Theological Wings](#)," 20:22–21:35).
- Test the equipment, and cue the first video excerpt. Immediately before this workshop, you may wish to open the video in three windows and cue all three excerpts.

### Description of Activity

Introduce the video clips, using these words or your own:

In January 2009, 32 leading Unitarian Universalist theologians, ministers, and activists gathered to reflect on the theological grounding of our social justice work. Many of the speakers addressed the question of race in powerful ways. We are going to look at three short clips from the DVD created from this event, called *A People So Bold*. After each clip, I will offer a question or two for you to reflect on and some time for silence, during which you may journal or meditate on what you just experienced. There will be time for in-depth sharing and response later in the workshop.

Introduce the first clip by saying that the speaker is Kat Liu, a UUA Witness Ministries Program Associate. Play the clip.

Ask participants:

- Kat Liu says, “Whether we see people as human or not depends on what we believe.” How does this connect with your experience?
- How do our beliefs shape our ideas about whose reality and whose perspective is important?

Allow about eight minutes for reflection and writing.

Introduce the second clip by saying that the speakers are Sharon Welch, a professor at Meadville Lombard Theological School, and Rev. Rob Hardies, senior minister at All Souls Church, Washington, D.C. Show the clip.

Ask participants:

- Sharon Welch talks about White people making a commitment to learning from mistakes, rather than feeling shame about being part of a system that privileges them. Reverend Hardies talks about resisting evil rather than hating it, because he recognizes that he is complicit in an evil system of power, dominance, and racism. What insights do they offer that are helpful to you?
- What are you left to ponder about what they said?

Allow about eight minutes for reflection and writing.

Introduce the third clip by saying that Taquiena Boston is director of the UJA Multicultural Growth and Witness Staff Group. Play the clip.

Ask participants:

- Taquiena Boston says that we must begin by being in relationship with people in our own neighborhoods and communities and learn to ask what being in relationship would look like to them. How could you begin to build such relationships?

Allow about eight minutes for reflection and writing.

## ACTIVITY 3: RACE-BASED REFLECTION GROUPS (60 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [About Race-Based Reflection Groups](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: List of reflection group members from Workshop 3, Activity 4
- Handout 1, [Reflection Group for People Who Are White](#) (included in this document)

- Handout 2, [Reflection Group for People of Color and from Racially or Ethnically Marginalized Groups](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 3, [Reflection Group for Biracial/Multiracial People](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Handout 4, [Reflection Group Questions for Groups Not Based on Ethnic/Racial Identity](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3, Serial Testimony Protocol
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Small object or talking stick for each small group

### Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1, About Race-Based Reflection Groups. Prepare to explain the purpose of race-based reflection groups and to answer questions about the process. If you are considering not asking participants to move into racial or ethnic identity-based groups, reflect on Leader Resource 1 with your co-facilitator. If you decide not to use racial or ethnic identity-based groups, clarify together your reasons for this choice.
- Copy the appropriate handouts for all participants. (If you have chosen not to use racial or ethnic identity-based groups, use Handout 4 for all participants.)
- Review Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3, Serial Testimony Protocol. Make a copy for each small group, and prepare to answer questions about the process.
- Decide which spaces the groups will use. Groups should meet in separate rooms so they cannot hear each other’s discussions.

### Description of Activity

Explain race-based reflection groups, or caucuses, using the information in Leader Resource 1. Invite each participant to choose one of three groups:

- People who are White
- People of Color and those from racially or ethnically marginalized groups
- Biracial or multiracial people or people who find that they are not able to identify with the White or People of Color groups

If you have chosen not to use racial or ethnic identity-based reflection groups, invite participants to move into



the intentionally diverse reflection groups established for Workshop 3. Refer to the list of group members from Workshop 3, as needed.

Indicate where each group will meet.

Give copies of the corresponding reflection group handout to all members of each group. Give each group a copy of Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3; a sheet of newsprint; markers; and (if you choose to use them) a small object or talking stick.

Invite members of each group to read through the instructions on their handout, select a facilitator, and then follow the process on the handout. Remind them to speak from their individual experience, making notes on the newsprint of common as well as unique experiences of living in a race-based society. Tell them they will have about 45 minutes for this discussion.

About 10 minutes before the end of the activity, and ask the groups to close their group as described in the handout. Collect the newsprint lists from small groups and tell them that their lists will be shared at the beginning of the next workshop.

## CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Customize Taking It Home and make copies for the group.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home and invite participants to do the suggested activities before the next meeting.

Offer the following words of Kat Liu and extinguish the chalice:

Some people have argued that Unitarian Universalism is not for everyone, that we cannot be all things to all people. While this is true, the question remains: What, then, will we be, and for whom? If we want to be a religion of the race and class privileged, then we need not change, and we can watch society pass us by. If it is our desire to be prophetic leaders in building a multiethnic, multicultural beloved community, we must step outside our culture-bound viewpoints, recognize that other equally valid viewpoints exist, and intentionally work to see through the eyes of others. Those among us who live on various margins have already had to learn to do this.

May we lead, not lag. May we reclaim the voice of our prophetic faith.

## Including All Participants

If any participants have visual impairments, prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few moments right after the workshop to ask each other:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do we need to make changes in the way we work together?

## TAKING IT HOME

Whatever any of us concludes about race relations, we should start by including all of us.  
— Frank Wu, author of *Yellow*

Read (or reread) your journaling notes and reflect on the voices and perspectives shared in your small group. Then, write questions, puzzlements, observations, and new insights you have. Find a conversation partner with whom you can share your questions and insights.

If you did not do Alternate Activity 1 as part of the Workshop, read Handout 5, *Pirates, Boats, and Adventures in Cross-Cultural Engagement*. Try to incorporate "tell me more" as a personal practice when in relationship with people whose culture, ethnicity, or race differs from your own.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WE'LL BUILD A LAND (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, enough for participants to share
- Handout 5, [Pirates, Boats, and Adventures in Cross-Cultural Engagement](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: *Singing the Journey*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook supplement, enough for participants to share
- Optional: Keyboard or other musical accompaniment

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 5 for all participants.

- Optional: Arrange for an accompanist or song leader.

### Description of Activity

Invite participants to sing the first verse and chorus of "We'll Build a Land," Hymn 121 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Distribute Handout 5 and explain that this article was posted on the UUA website as part of the event coverage at General Assembly in 2009. Invite participants to read the handout. Then, invite questions, comments, and observations.

If you have copies of *Singing the Journey*, invite participants to sing Hymn 1064, "Blue Boat Home," bearing in mind the perspective voiced by Sofia Bettencourt.

Ask:

- What ideas and perspectives in this story are new to you?
- How might you incorporate "tell me more" as a practice when in relationship with people whose culture, ethnicity, or race differs from your own?

Sing Hymn 121, using the "We'll Build a World" lyrics offered by the Council on Cross-Cultural Engagement.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ABOUT TWO UU BLACK KIDS (40 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 6, [About Two UU Black Kids](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 6 for all participants.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 6 and invite participants to read the two companion pieces, one a blog entry and the other a sermon. Then, invite questions, comments, and observations.

Ask:

- What ideas and perspectives in this story are new to you?
- Why did Rasiq and Kenny's mothers both want them to become friends?
- Have you ever been in a conversation where someone (maybe you) said, "You're not really like them you're more like us."? Do these blog posts change your thinking about that conversation?
- Brown says, "It seems to me that the great power of "Whiteness" doesn't lie in the ability to

sit on the shoulders of history and scream "I win!" It's the ability to be whoever you want, whenever you want, with minimal judgment and the privilege of being the measuring stick for humanity." How have you experienced the power of Whiteness in your life?

- Kenny Wiley talks about being the "smart, nice, non-threatening black guy." When have you experienced or witnessed situations where White people made distinctions between what they considered threatening and non-threatening Black people? How is drawing these distinctions a manifestation of White privilege?
- Wiley speaks of the "double isolation" experienced by People of Color in Unitarian Universalism, saying: "On the one hand, we recognize that we're different in some way from the white folks in our churches even though we align theologically. But ... we sometimes feel cut off from our racial identity group." How does Wiley's experience reflect your own or shed light on the experience of People of Color in Unitarian Universalism?
- What new Unitarian Universalist story does Wiley offer? What would have to happen for a new story such as this to take root?
- How do these writings help you to better understand tokenism, especially in situations where there are few People of Color?
- How do these writings help you to better understand White privilege?

those from racially and ethnically marginalized groups to know about my experience here is...

## **HANDOUT 1: REFLECTION GROUP FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE WHITE**

Select a facilitator from the group to choose questions, read them aloud, and monitor the time. Use the Serial Testimony Protocol (Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3) to talk about as many of the following questions as possible. Note that there are more questions than your group will have time to fully explore. The facilitator should choose questions that will engage and challenge the group. Be sure to save 10 minutes at the end for synthesizing and recording your group's reflections.

### **Questions About the Program**

- How is the program going for you so far?
- What has been your previous experience of talking about race with people from the same racial group? When did you feel supported? What felt awkward or risky?
- Describe the places where the content of this program engages you, and when you feel disconnected. What role, if any, do you think/feel your privilege plays in that regard?

### **Questions About Being White**

- To what degree are you self-aware of personal characteristics and identity as a White person?
- How is it possible to be antiracist without appearing to be anti-White?
- Who taught you to be "White"? How are those lessons still playing out in your life today?
- What insights did the people in the videos offer that are helpful to you? What are you left to ponder about what they said?

### **Spiritual Questions**

- How can Unitarian Universalism support antiracist work? In what ways does it sometimes fall short?
- How can White people have a conversation about racial dominance without being pulled into cycles of blame, guilt, anger, and denial?
- What spiritual practices can you create that help to dismantle the systems of racial dominance in which you were raised?

### **Closing the Exercise**

As a group, prepare a list of statements that you want People of Color and people from racially or ethnically marginalized groups to know about your experience and lessons learned in this program, so far. Begin your list with these words: What I want People of Color and

## HANDOUT 2: REFLECTION GROUP FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR AND FROM RACIALLY OR ETHNICALLY MARGINALIZED GROUPS

The experience of racially or ethnically marginalized groups in the United States is nothing short of tragic: the loss of identity, dignity, property, and cultural communities, the assignment to second-class citizenship . . . not to mention the violent crimes committed against People of Color throughout U.S. history. Nonetheless, People of Color and those from racially and ethnically marginalized groups have found enormous strength through adversity. The reflection group for People of Color and those from racially or ethnically marginalized groups will work to affirm and heal the spirit of those with marginalized racial and ethnic identities by first naming the landscape of their experience. They will also consider how to create healthy relationships alongside White people who are committed to dismantling structures of systematic domination.

Select a facilitator from the group to choose questions, read them aloud, and keep track of time. Use the Serial Testimony Protocol (Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3) to discuss as many of the following questions as possible. Note that there are more questions than your group will have time to fully explore. The facilitator should choose questions that will engage and challenge the group. Be sure to save 10 minutes at the end for synthesizing and recording your group's reflections.

### Questions About the Program

- How is the program going for you so far?
- What has been your previous experience of talking about race with people from the same racial or ethnic group? When did you feel supported? What felt awkward or risky?
- Describe some times when the program has engaged you, and some times when you've felt disconnected. What role, if any, do you think White privilege or race-based identity or oppression plays in this regard?
- What insights were offered in the video clips that are helpful to you?

### Questions About Identity

- Who taught you how to be \_\_\_\_\_ (African, Asian, Native American or American Indian, Latina or Latino, etc.)? How are those lessons still playing out in your life today?
- What have you discovered about your own history with racism that is puzzling to you?

- How have you contributed to maintaining systems of White supremacy? How, if at all, do you still contribute to that system?
- Racism invokes shame and confusion for many racially and ethnically marginalized groups. What issues has this workshop raised for you?
- How might it be possible to be antiracist without appearing to be anti-White?

### Spiritual Questions

- What role might People of Color and those from racially or ethnically marginalized groups play in debunking the dysfunctions of racial dominance?
- In your opinion, how does the theology of Unitarian Universalism speak to People of Color and those from racially and ethnically marginalized groups?
- What practices and policies can the congregation create that would keep you at the table in good faith and with a sense of integrity?
- Where do you believe the realities of Unitarian Universalism fall short of its ideals?
- What role can the community of People of Color and those from racially and ethnically marginalized groups play to support and encourage your own spiritual journey?

### Closing the Exercise

As a group, prepare a list of statements that you want White people and multiracial or biracial people to know about your experience and lessons learned so far. Begin your list with these words: What I want White people and mixed race or biracial people to know about my experience here is . . .

## HANDOUT 3: THE REFLECTION GROUP FOR BIRACIAL/MULTIRACIAL PEOPLE

Participants in the Biracial and Multiracial Reflection Group will work to explore, affirm, and heal their spirit by first naming the landscape of their experience. They will also consider how to create healthy relationships alongside White people, People of Color, and those from racially or ethnically marginalized groups who are committed to dismantling structures of systematic domination.

Select a facilitator from the group to choose questions, read them aloud, and keep track of the time. Use the Serial Testimony Protocol (Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3) to discuss as many of the following questions as possible. Note that there are more questions than your group will have time to fully explore. The facilitator should choose questions that will engage and challenge the group. Be sure to save 10 minutes at the end to synthesize your group's reflections.

### Questions About the Program

- How is the program going for you so far?
- What has been your previous experience of talking about race with people who consider themselves to be mixed race or biracial? When did you feel supported? What felt awkward or risky?
- Describe some times when the content of the program has engaged you and some times when you felt disconnected. What role, if any, does White privilege or race-based identity or oppression play in your feelings of connection or disconnection?
- What insights were offered in the video clips that are helpful to you?

### Questions About Identity

- Who taught you how to be \_\_\_\_\_ (Latina or Latino, Hispanic, biracial, multiracial, etc.)? How are those lessons still playing out in your life today?
- What have you discovered about your own history with racism that is puzzling to you?
- How have you contributed to maintaining systems of White supremacy? How, if at all, do you still contribute to that system?
- Racism invokes shame and confusion for many racially or ethnically marginalized groups. What issues have been raised for you?

- How might it be possible to be antiracist without appearing to be anti-White?

### Spiritual Questions

- What role might biracial and multiracial groups play in debunking the dysfunctions of racial dominance?
- In your opinion, how does the theology of Unitarian Universalism speak to biracial and multiracial people?
- What practices and policies can the congregation create that would keep you at the table in good faith and with a sense of integrity?
- Where do you believe the realities of Unitarian Universalism fall short of its ideals?
- What role can the community of biracial and multiracial people play to support and encourage your own spiritual journey?

### Closing the Exercise

As a group, prepare a list of statements that you want White people and People of Color and those from racially or ethnically marginalized groups to know about your experience and lessons learned so far. Begin your list with these words: What I want White people, People of Color, and those from racially or ethnically marginalized groups to know about my experience here is . . .

## **HANDOUT 4: REFLECTION GROUP QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS NOT BASED ON ETHNIC/RACIAL IDENTITY**

As a group, prepare a list of highlights from your conversation to share with the other groups.

Select a facilitator from the group to choose questions, read them aloud, and monitor the time. Use the Serial Testimony Protocol (Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3) to talk about as many of the following questions as possible. Note that there are more questions than your group will have time to fully explore. The facilitator should choose questions that will engage and challenge the group. Be sure to save 10 minutes at the end to synthesize your group's reflections.

### **Questions About the Program**

- How is the program going for you so far?
- What has been your previous experience of talking about race? When did you feel supported? What felt awkward or risky?
- What insights were offered in the video clips that are helpful to you? What are you left to ponder about what the people said?

### **Questions About Identity**

- When and how did you learn about race?
- If you are a person marginalized by race or ethnicity, when and how did you learn what it means to be a Person of Color or someone marginalized by race or ethnicity? What early messages did you receive?
- If you are a White person, when and how did you learn what it means to be White? What early messages did you receive?

### **Spiritual Questions**

- How can Unitarian Universalism support antiracist work? In what ways does it sometimes fall short?
- If you are a White person, how do you think White people can have a conversation about racial dominance without being pulled into cycles of blame, guilt, anger, and denial?
- If you are a Person of Color, how do you think the theology of Unitarian Universalism speaks to People of Color and those from racially and ethnically marginalized groups?
- What spiritual practices can you create that may help to dismantle the systems of racial dominance?

### **Closing the Exercise**

## HANDOUT 5: PIRATES, BOATS, AND ADVENTURES IN CROSS-CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

The Council for Cross-Cultural Engagement (CCE) first convened about cultural misappropriation that occurred at General Assembly 2007 in Seattle, Washington. Since then, they have been talking about misunderstandings that happen when cultures intersect, when an individual may feel marginalized when music, a poem, a reading, prayer, or spiritual practice is used without context credit or any sense of relationship to the communities involved.

Rev. Danielle DiBona began the session by describing her initial experience in Seattle. She had attended the Service of the Living Tradition, and the program included the hymn "We'll Build a Land." When DiBona, a Wampanoag Indian, saw hundreds of mostly white faces in the hall singing this, she thought about how white European culture indeed had built—on Native American land. Knowing all this was done at the expense of Native culture caused her great pain.

DiBona shared these feelings with Keith Arnold, who had helped plan the service. Arnold, president of the UU Musicians Network (UUMN) initially replied that he would never sing the song again. But DiBona assured him that he could, now that she had been heard. Arnold told the attendees he will always remember her story when he sings it. This experience has changed how he thinks of this song, he said, using "other ears." He advised answering with "Tell me more," rather than trying to explain what you hoped a song would mean.

Members of CCE then shared examples of multiple interpretations. For example, most responded to "Blue Boat Home" as a comforting song with calming imagery. However, for Sofia Betancourt, it reminded her of the many slaves who chose to jump overboard slave ships and drown, rather than remain in bondage.

Another example is the hymnal song "Light of Ages and Nations," a longtime national anthem of Germany. The Haydn melody was used by the Nazis during WWII with different lyrics that took on a pro-Nazi connotation. Linda Friedman said she found it hard to listen to, as it invoked painful feelings about the Holocaust. Ellen Zemlin experienced it differently, however. Zemlin then shared knowledge of Holocaust history, that only a portion of the lyrics are still a part of the anthem. David Takahashi Morris shared that he was asked to never play the song again, because it offended a congregation member. "That tune," he said, "is a casualty of WWII; it's lost and can't come back."

To address the initial incident that sparked the group's inception, CCE presented a worship service at General

Assembly on Thursday morning. They presented the hymn, "We'll Build a Land," and offered dialogue expression that illustrated how people with different backgrounds experience hymns in different ways:

Come build a world where families and neighbors  
United by love may then create peace  
Where justice shall roll down like waters  
And peace like an ever-flowing stream

## HANDOUT 6: ABOUT TWO UU BLACK KIDS

"About Two UU Black Kids — Part I," written by Raziq Brown, was posted in the blog, *Vive la Flame*, on August 29, 2011. The response, written by Kenny Wiley, was originally posted in the blog, and later adapted. The adaptation that appears below, *A Unitarian Universalist Story*, was a sermon delivered at the Harvard Divinity School Chapel service on April 12, 2012. Both pieces are used with permission.

### About Two UU Black Kids—Part I

"Why do you keep telling me to be friends with Kenny Wiley?" I said to my mother.

A silent anger steadily blossomed in my gut while I stared at slowly chilling eggs.

"Because he seems like a nice boy and I think you should get to know him," said my mother, patiently washing dishes.

"You just want me to be friends with him because he's black!" I exclaimed.

"You say that like it's a bad thing."

"Because it is! I make friends with who I want to make friends with. I have a diverse group of friends! I don't care about race! Nobody does! Just you and—" I stopped when I realized I didn't hear the sound of running water.

My mother had a hard look set in her eyes, observing me. She wasn't angry, exactly—it was something else. A shade of confusion mixed with pity and a splash of worry.

"If that's the case," she said very carefully, "why aren't you friends with Kenny?"

Bingo.

I was 13 at the time so the best answer I could muster was . . .

"Because we're just not friends."

"One of these days, your white friends are going to leave you. Not because they're racist, but because, Unitarian or not, they're still white. You're too young to understand this, but they live in the same world you do and it's not kind to black people."

With that, my mother went back to doing dishes.

In hindsight, I know what my answer should've been. I even knew what it was then—I just didn't have the balls to say it.

I wasn't friends with Kenny Wiley for the same reason my mother wanted me to know him. He was black.

When you're a teenager, a large portion of your life is spent trying to figure out how to fit in.

I was a black male, from an upper middle class, highly educated two-parent household, in a predominantly white liberal religion, enrolled in gifted-talented/honors/AP programs since birth.

I played soccer, Dungeons & Dragons, and read comic books.

Fitting in was hard enough.

The last thing I needed was to draw attention to myself by hanging out with the only other black UU kid in the entire Southwest District.

I mean, what would people think?

Kenny and I were, and are, very different people.

While he was leading workshops and running rallies (cons to everyone else), I was sneaking off to pass a forty [a 40 oz. bottle of beer] around with underage suburbanites. On the rare occasion Kenny and I bumped into each other, we would exchange awkward handshakes and even-more-awkward small talk.

And so it went for years.

As my mother predicted, between ages 13 to 16 many of my white buddies disappeared. Not because they were racist, but because in many ways YRUU [Young Religious Unitarian Universalists] is a haven for misfit White kids. As they grow up, their social circles grow, and eventually they homogenize, like normal teenagers should.

The problem was, I didn't have anyone to homogenize with.

It seems to me that the great power of "Whiteness" doesn't lie in the ability to sit on the shoulders of history and scream, "I win!"

It's the ability to be whoever you want, whenever you want, with minimal judgment and the privilege of being the measuring stick for humanity.

If you're a white Wiccan, people will think you're odd.

If you're a black Wiccan, your coven will think you're odd.

Standards of beauty are in European increments.

In history class, you learn that most of civilization as you know it was drafted and built by white geniuses.

Black history reads like a Russian tragedy.

Imagine growing up with the realization that everyone who looks like you doesn't live like you, while everyone that lives like you doesn't look like you.



Imagine that your face was the face of crime, poverty, and poor education, while the faces of your friends were the poster for everything normal and good in the world.

Now imagine that your peers, your mentors, and friends believed that too—and told you regularly.

“You’re not really like *them*, you’re more like *us*.”

They don’t say these things because they’re racist (obviously, they like you). They say it because they live in the same world you do and it’s not been very kind to black people.

It is a given that most teenagers are hypersensitive to everything concerning their personal lives, but when you’re a black kid growing up like a white person, you have X-ray vision and bionic hearing.

So, when a group of black kids pick on you at school, it’s because they hate you, not because kids are mean. And it’s not just those black kids that hate you, it’s all black people.

When your white friends make bad race jokes or let loose some ignorant comment, you laugh it off with gusto—because they’re the only friends you’ve got and it’s your fault for being too sensitive.

Besides: you’re different, you’re special. That’s why you’ve been chosen, not because you have the magic power to add diversity to any setting while preserving the cultural attitudes of the people there.

On the rare chance you meet someone who is just like you, you avoid them because they remind you of your insecurities, and you resent them for it.

What I’ve just described are some of the side effects of tokenism. A problem that Unitarian Universalists of Color know intimately and the rest of the church doesn’t really know how to address.

I’m not even sure that they can.

As far as white folks go, UUs are pretty good about the race thing. A lot of them adopt children of color, historically they actively support Anti-Racist efforts, and their support/want for diversity within the faith is so great it can be nauseating at times.

At the UUA General Assembly, I commented:

“I’ve never met so many white people who were happy to see me for no reason at all.”

The problem is there aren’t enough people of color, let alone black people, to go around. There aren’t enough to change the culture.

It’s easy to declare that your church is an unyielding force for diversity when the diverse peoples in your church act like you.

For all the times I’ve heard some UU minister appropriate a Native American blessing or Far Eastern meditation technique, never have I once heard a Vodun [indigenous organized religion of coastal West Africa] prayer.

When I do go to GA I never take my badge off, even outside of the convention center. I find it’s easy to be mistaken for some random “urban youth” and UUs become a lot less friendly, real fast—even the People of Color.

At 16 I joined the now defunct national organization known as DRUUMM YaYA (Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries Youth and Young Adult Caucus) and I finally found my own misfit haven.

The YaYA kids felt the way I felt about my identity and were dealing with all the same teenage angst I had.

In many ways it was “race therapy.”

When I returned home from DRUUMM YaYA events I would actively engage the black kids who teased me, only to find out they thought I hated them just as much as I thought they hated me.

When my white friends said stupid things I’d call them out on it, and the ones who made a fuss about it tended to be assholes that weren’t worth my time anyway.

Instead of using my hypersensitivity to race as a way to beat up my self-esteem, I used it as a tool to better understand people of different cultures and backgrounds.

Instead of agonizing in a colorblind world of political correctness, mine was now in high definition, and it was in this state of mind, at age 18, that I met Kenny Wiley for the first time in five years.

It was after a rally and everyone had gone to International House of Pancakes for breakfast.

“Kenny, I think we should be friends. There is no reason for the only two black kids in the district to not talk to each other,” I said.

“Yeah, well, I guess not, but . . . I mean, we don’t HAVE to be friends because we’re black, do we?” said Kenny.

“No, but it wouldn’t be a bad thing, would it? Some people bond over sports and tits. I mean, I’ve spent years not talking to you because I was afraid of what other people might think. How stupid is that? I don’t know if you’ve ever felt that way—”

“Oh man, I know exactly how you feel. I’m even a little nervous right now.”

A cursory glance around the restaurant confirmed that our friends were aware the only two black UU kids in the

entire district had gathered for some clandestine meeting.

We looked at each other and laughed.

“Man,” Kenny said, smiling, “my mom is going to be so happy that we talked.”

We’ve been family ever since.

### **A Unitarian Universalist Story**

Unitarian Universalism has a story. No, wait. Unitarian Universalism IS a story. It is the story of Channing, of Emerson, of Fuller—but it is more than that, too. Unitarian Universalism is the story of identity, of race, of sexual orientation, of longing, of discovery. It is your story. And it is my story. Unitarian Universalism is my story. This UU story is a story of race, identity, and self-loathing. And this Unitarian Universalist story begins with a chat with my mom nearly ten years ago, when I was 14.

“Why aren’t you friends with George Brown? His father is a great man and I think you two would get along well.”

“This AGAIN? Really, Mom? We’re just not friends, okay? We don’t have anything in common.”

“Nonsense. You’re both educated black teenagers with brilliant black parents, if I do say so myself. Next time we go to Dallas or Fort Worth, give him a call.”

“Yeah,” I said, “maybe when the New Orleans Saints win the Super Bowl.”

This conversation happened in the summer of 2002, but it also could have been in December 2003, or May 2005, or January 2006. Every so often, my mom would needle me about Raziq George Brown.

“The *other* black guy.”

Throughout high school, I was a proud member of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) in the Southwest District, a rowdy group of roughly 150 teenagers who met several times a year at churches in the region. Like most things in my life then, it was an almost entirely white community. Sometimes we had nine or ten black youths, and other times I was the only one.

I loved the SWD community. I hated Raziq George Brown.

I didn’t really, of course. What I hated was the fact that he kept me honest. Who I hated was myself. I hated thinking and talking about race. In junior high school, I was an equal opportunity verbal punching bag. Kids, black and white, weirded out by the fact that I looked black but sounded “white,” made fun of me often.

I grew socially in high school and made several strong friends. In my UU community between 2003 and 2005, I

dealt with race by taking advantage of my blackness. I was different. I was special. I was the *smart, nice, non-threatening* black guy. I was the Allstate guy, and my white friends were in good hands. I didn’t challenge their assumptions or prejudices, and I didn’t complain.

Raziq George Brown messed that up.

His presence at church rallies meant I couldn’t lie to myself. He never made any race-related comments to me, but he didn’t have to. Seeing him made me admit to myself a terrible truth.

I was terrified of black people, or, more accurately, I was terrified of being lumped with most black folks. I didn’t want the negative stereotypes or the mistreatment. I wanted to be an *individual*. I wanted out of having my race be an issue. Being black carries with it certain responsibilities and burdens, and I wanted no part of them.

I just knew I was going to get made fun of by other young black folks. I was most scared of being accused of being a sellout. I was afraid of what my white friends would think if I had too many black friends; I also felt self-conscious about only having a handful of non-family black people in my life. I felt trapped.

After five years of avoiding each other, of brief, painfully awkward small talk, Raziq George Brown and I finally broke the ice. After a church rally in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2007, we all went to IHOP before splitting off to go home. It was our final UU youth rally. For some reason—maybe it was that we were 18 instead of 14, or because our mothers had pestered us for several years—as we all waited for tables, Mr. Brown and I actually stopped to talk.

“So ... why don’t we ever hang?” Raziq said.

“I didn’t think we should try to be friends just because we’re both black.”

“I thought the same thing.”

“That seems like a pretty dumb reason to avoid each other, though,” I said.

“That’s what my mom keeps telling me,” Raziq replied.

This is a Unitarian Universalist story. Too often, the conversation about race in Unitarian Universalism is about white folks—how our mostly white churches need to work on being more welcoming, provide more dynamic or diverse forms of worship, how more minorities are needed. These conversations are important, but they don’t tell the whole story. My story is a UU story, too. Raziq and I became best friends, but we had lots to navigate.

This is a Unitarian Universalist story. It’s hardly unique. The minorities in UU churches, whatever our age, are often dealing with “double isolation”: On the one hand,

we recognize that we're different in some way from the white folks in our churches even though we align theologically. But as I've outlined, we sometimes feel cut off from our racial identity group. My own father, a 60-year-old black man who is president of my home church and claims to be "not preoccupied with race," gets emotional when he talks about how the urban black kids in his New Orleans junior high school classes mercilessly teased him for "sounding like a white boy." He still hasn't forgiven them, though I'm not sure he has realized that. I don't think he's forgiven the white kids in high school who threw rocks at him, either.

For many minority folks in UU churches, there is pain deep within. This isn't true of everybody, of course. But there's often that double isolation. I know I have it. The black Christian church doesn't feel like home theologically, but sometimes, it's nice to go . . . except there's a feeling that I don't really belong there, either. There is skepticism of me in my predominately black circles . . . like, why would you go to a white church? Being told "you're not really black" from folks black, white, and other, it adds up. It's like being told, "You don't really count."

*This is where Unitarian Universalism comes in, friends. Because I do count. Everybody counts. I bring this message of confusion, this sense of "double isolation," because I believe that Unitarian Universalism can do something about it. And I don't just mean people of color identity or support groups, though that needs to be a part of it. I mean everybody. But we're going to have to be willing to adapt a little bit. We're going to have to try and look and feel a bit different. Because this story is a Unitarian Universalist story.*

We need to look and feel different because our message is one the world needs. Individuals and the world alike need our message of affirmation. The world needs our message of universal salvation. People need our message that every person—EVERY person—matters. Nobody is beyond hope, beyond love, beyond reconciliation.

I know this is uncomfortable for some of us. Some of us don't like to proselytize, because it sounds like what we have tried to get away from. But I stand by my statements. Individuals need our message. The world needs our message. Make no mistake; I'm not saying that they need us, the super-liberal mostly white superhero injustice-fixers. What's needed is our faith. People need our message that everyone has inherent worth and dignity. People need a faith that says, "You're not saved only if you do this, or believe this, or change this about yourself—but because you are of the Divine, you are loved beyond belief."

And people with stories like mine need a place where they can share them, where they can come together

with people who also have stories of isolation—different stories of isolation. Our churches have people whose families don't talk to them because they are with someone of the same gender. Our churches have people who have been wounded by their religious upbringing. Our churches have people isolated by grief, by loss, by abuse, by loneliness. And our churches have people who feel isolated because their lives have been just great, thank you.

When I worship, I want to *feel, in community*. I want to sing the hymns (poorly, in my case) not just because we're supposed to, but because I *need* to. I want to worship next to people and say to them with my actions, "I don't know your story, but I'm glad you're here." And I want them to say that to me, in one way or another, "I'm glad you're here."

But communities like that don't just *happen*. Right now, I feel that sense of double isolation often when I'm in UU settings, and I want that to change. Part of that is my responsibility—to share my story, to do my part to love and listen. But when my black friends ask me why I am a Unitarian Universalist, I envision a time when I'll be able to say more than "it's my theological home." I want to say more than "I theologically can't be anywhere else." I want to be able to tell them *all the time* what's true of the UU experience some of the time: "I am a Unitarian Universalist because I am affirmed there. I can talk how I talk and read what I read and have the friends I do and not be judged, because there, *I matter*. Period."

I want to tell them that I am a UU because I can quote William Ellery Channing and Kanye West in the same sermon because, really, I am both of them. I want to tell them that I am a UU because I want to hear poems from Mary Oliver and from Def Poetry Jam. Why? Because we UUs believe, as Oliver said, that "you do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles, repenting," and we also believe as the slam poet J. Ivy does when he said, "I'm not just another individual. My spirit is a part of this; THAT'S why I get spiritual."

I want to tell them that I am a UU because here we sing *Gathered Here* softly and with reverence, AND we sing *We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table* loudly and with great passion, and feel them both. I want to tell them that I am a UU not because I theologically can't be anywhere else, but because *my soul* can't be *anywhere else*.

I can't tell them that yet. But I believe we are on the road, because this is a Unitarian Universalist story. It can be more than a place where mostly affluent folks with varying views on God come together and listen to lectures and think a little bit. Unitarian Universalism must also be what we say it is—a space where people whose inherent worth and dignity has been challenged because they're not black enough or Latina enough or straight

enough or gay enough or saved enough can come together and say, together, ENOUGH. Because I am enough. You are enough. We are enough. God is enough. The Spirit of Life is enough.

But in order for that to happen, our worship services must *become* enough. Our willingness to try different things must become enough. *We* must become *enough*.

To do that, we must live out Mary Oliver's words when she writes, "Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine."

Def Poetry Jam poet J. Ivy puts it another way: "If we were off the highest cliff, on the highest riff, And you slipped off the side and clenched on to your life in my grip ... I would never, ever let you down."

## LEADER RESOURCE 1: ABOUT RACE-BASED REFLECTION GROUPS

Race-based identity groups, or caucuses, provide a chance for people to talk in a structured format with others from their own ethnic/racial group, an opportunity that is rare, even for those who regularly participate in multicultural dialogues. This kind of within-group talk more often than not surfaces a different type of conversation, both in tone and content, than does multicultural dialogue. In racial affinity groups, people who identify as White or of European ancestry are able to ask questions and raise issues without the fear of offending People of Color and people from racially or ethnically marginalized groups. People socialized in racially or ethnically oppressed groups find that they can talk about issues without the burden of rationalizing and proving the validity of their experience to White people.

There may be discomfort among some who believe this sort of exercise is divisive or unnecessarily painful. Some may resist moving into such groups. This may be true (for different reasons) for both White people and people from marginalized racial and ethnic identities. White people, for example, might say, "I want to hear/learn from People of Color." People of Color and from racially or ethnically marginalized groups may have a need to affirm their universal humanity and say, "I prefer not to wear a racial hat." Biracial and multiracial people may find it difficult to "make a choice about which group to join." Other issues and concerns may be voiced.

Acknowledge concerns and explain that the intent of the exercise is to deepen and broaden the perspectives of participants to produce new ways of thinking, because creating a different type of group can create a different kind of conversational outcome. In addition, emphasize that the purpose of racial identity group dialogues is to support multicultural community by helping groups to engage in what Eric Law describes as doing homework together before encountering other cultural communities. This exercise is intended to further encourage the development of spiritual practices that support the doing of antiracist/multicultural work. Note that all the other workshops have offered conversations across racial lines and that there will be more opportunity for multicultural and multiracial dialogue in future workshops.

When participants divide into racial identity groups, emphasize that the decision about which group to join is up to the individual. Congregations in which there are no racially/ethnically marginalized groups should still participate in this activity. There will be opportunities in later sessions to explore issues related to this particular

project. Although there may be a variety of different racial/ethnic identities among those who identify as People of Color and from racially or ethnically marginalized groups, suggest that they form one "racially or ethnically marginalized identity" group. In some cases, participants may choose to form a fourth group for people of a particular ethnic or racial identity.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

The UUA Multicultural Growth & Witness staff group offers resources, curricula, trainings, and tools to help Unitarian Universalist congregations and leaders

engage in the work of antiracism, antioppression, and multiculturalism. Visit [www.uua.org/multiculturalism](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism) or email [multicultural @ uua.org](mailto:multicultural@uua.org) to learn more.

# WORKSHOP 6: BUILDING MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE AS PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

## INTRODUCTION

*... For all the significant identities that constitute each of us, there is a personal essence that defines who we are, a singular soul that is hidden deep within beyond the layers of identity that protect it. When we make initial contact with each other, we only see the outside of that soul at first. But only through sustained communication and authentic relationships can we begin to penetrate the layers of social identity to view and enjoy the singular soul within. — Julio Noboa, contemporary educator and author, member of the Latino/Latina Unitarian Universalist Networking Association*

This workshop introduces the concept of "multicultural competence." Participants will consider the kinds of knowledge and skills that individuals, communities, and groups must learn and practice in order to build healthy, accountable relationships with communities of color and other racially and ethnically marginalized groups.

The workshop also presents stories from Unitarian Universalism that offer models for multicultural competence as personal practice. In particular, it presents an incident that happened at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Fort Worth, Texas in 2005 as a teachable moment for transforming our Unitarian Universalist communities. Because the event generated feelings of pain and loss, participants with first-hand knowledge or direct experience may harbor feelings of anxiety, hurt, or anger. Encourage participants to use the tools and knowledge they are gaining in these workshops to identify lessons they can draw from their experiences to help move Unitarian Universalism and their own communities toward Beloved Community [Note: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned a Beloved Community of love and justice, where the races would be reconciled and the deep and terrible wounds of racism would finally be healed.]

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce the concept of "multicultural competence"
- Present knowledge and skills that individuals and congregations must learn and practice in order to build healthy, accountable relationships with communities of color and other racially and ethnically marginalized groups
- Offer stories of Unitarian Universalist young adults who provide models of multicultural competence
- Present information about a series of events involving issues of race, ethnicity, and culture that reverberate in Unitarian Universalism today
- Invite participants to increase their multicultural competence by applying what they have learned to analyze the issues.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Gain the knowledge and skills needed to be culturally competent
- Learn about Unitarian Universalist young adults who model multicultural competence
- Become familiar with a 2005 UUA General Assembly incident involving race, ethnicity, and culture
- Apply knowledge about multicultural competence, identity, and privilege to an analysis of the issues.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	25
Activity 1: Multicultural Competence	20
Activity 2: Multicultural Competence in Action	30
Activity 3: The Fort Worth Incident	40
Closing	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider the definition of "multicultural competence" and the characteristics of a person with strong cultural competence. Consider your own life experiences, recalling times when you gained important knowledge about people whose race, ethnicity, generation, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or some other aspect of their culture is different from yours. How has learning to navigate across cultural differences enriched your life? In your current situation, how do you apply what you have learned?

## OPENING (25 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Story, "[Russell](#) (included in this document) "
- Newsprint lists created by reflection groups in Workshop 5, Activity 3
- Timepiece (seconds)

### Preparation for Activity

- Prepare to read the story "Russell" to the group.

### Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share these words from Rev. Fred Small, Senior Minister of First Parish Cambridge (Massachusetts) Unitarian Universalist:

Let's stop wishing for Beloved Community and start dreaming it, planning it, seeing it, living it, until we wake up one astonishing blessed morning to find the dream come true.

Invite the reflection groups which met as part of Workshop 5, Activity 3, to post and read aloud their newsprint lists of things they want others to know. Pause for a few moments after each list to allow participants time to reflect. Ask them to simply take in what has been written and refrain from offering comments or questions.

Read the story "Russell" aloud. Ask participants to consider their own "human heart" and how it is changing and growing. Invite each person, in turn, to check in.

Say, in these words or your own:

I invite you to share one insight or understanding that you have gained about race, identity, and privilege. To make sure everyone has a turn to speak, I'm going to ask you to limit your speaking to one minute. I will pass the watch to help you keep track of your speaking time.

Note: If you do not have newsprint lists from the small groups to share, allow each participant two minutes to share a thought or insight about their own heart in response to the story.

## ACTIVITY 1: MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Multicultural Competence](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Consider the examples you will provide from your own experience for each characteristic of multicultural competence.

### Description of Activity

Distribute the handout and invite participants to read it along with you. Read the definition aloud, but do not spend a great deal of time discussing it. Move quickly to the characteristics of a person who displays multicultural competence. Read the characteristics one at a time, inviting clarification questions after each. For each characteristic, provide an example from your experience or invite participants to volunteer an example from theirs.

Close the discussion by inviting participants to consider this question:

- In your experiences working with people from different cultural groups or who have different affiliations or different world views, how do these competencies challenge you?

## ACTIVITY 2: MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ACTION (30 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Fragments and Front Porches](#) (included in this document) "
- Story, "[Seek Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly](#) (included in this document) "
- Handout 2, [Multicultural Competence Worksheet](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy both stories for all participants.
- Make two copies of Handout 2 for each participant.

### Description of Activity

Explain that participants will hear two stories written by and about young adult Unitarian Universalists reflecting on antiracism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism as spiritual and personal practices. Distribute both stories. Read each story aloud or ask a volunteer to do so. Invite



participants to offer brief comments or reflections after each.

Say:

Although these two young adult Unitarian Universalists have different racial identities, there are similarities in how they express their commitment to their faith. What similarities do you hear in the two stories? What differences?

Allow about five minutes for discussion.

Distribute Handout 2. Invite participants to make notes on the handout about multicultural competence as demonstrated by the story's authors. Allow another five minutes for participants to complete their handouts.

Ask participants to turn to another person and share their observations.

## ACTIVITY 3: THE FORT WORTH INCIDENT (40 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Participants' copies of Handout 2, [Multicultural Competence Worksheet](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 3, [The Fort Worth Incident](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3 for all participants.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 3. Invite participants to read the first two sections, stopping at the Recommendations. Ask participants if they have any prior knowledge of the incident described. Invite any comments and feedback on the story.

Ask:

- What would have made this situation play out differently?
- What multicultural skills or competencies might have made a positive difference?"

Encourage participants to use Handout 2 as a lens to help examine the issues and to observe how multicultural competence—and the lack of it—is reflected in the way the situations developed in Fort Worth. Record key points of the discussion on newsprint. Allow about 20 minutes for this discussion.

Note that the Special Review Commission report includes a number of learnings and recommendations for moving forward. Invite participants to read that section of the handout.

Ask:

- How are these recommendations similar to points raised in our discussion of skills and competencies that could have made a difference in this situation?
- How are they different?
- What insights have you gained from examining this incident and report?

## CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [Instructions for the Journey](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Taking It Home for all participants.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to do the suggested activities before the next meeting.

Offer Leader Resource 1 as a closing, and extinguish the chalice.

### Including All Participants

Prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home for participants who may be visually impaired.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few moments right after the workshop to check in with each other. Ask yourselves:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do we need to make changes in the way we work together?

## TAKING IT HOME

... For all the significant identities that constitute each of us, there is a personal essence that defines who we are, a singular soul that is hidden deep within beyond the layers of identity that protect it. When we make initial contact with each other, we only see the outside of that soul at first. But only through sustained communication and authentic relationships can we begin to penetrate the layers of social

identity to view and enjoy the singular soul within. — Julio Noboa, contemporary educator and author, member of the Latino/Latina Unitarian Universalist Networking Association

What are you curious about? What practical things can you do to develop your personal cultural awareness of groups or people who are unlike you? Make a plan and then journal about your intentions, or find a trusted conversation partner to help you be accountable, over time.

## STORY: FRAGMENTS AND FRONT PORCHES

By Rev. Elizabeth Buffington Nguyen, Leadership Development Associate for Youth and Young Adults of Color.

When I was 24, my father gave me a new name. I was learning Vietnamese in graduate school. The professor required all students who only had an English name to ask their parents to give them a Vietnamese name. My father chose Hien, meaning "gentle."

As a teenager I had yearned to have a Vietnamese name—all of my cousins had one. To me, not having a Vietnamese name was just another way that I was not whole, not authentically Asian, not Vietnamese enough, not worthy of my own family. I was, in theologian Rita Nakashima Brock's words, restless in my longing to belong. Years later, when my father named me as Hien, I didn't feel the simple relief of belonging that I had so craved. Instead I found something more sacred, something expansive, fierce, complex and true: I was born Elizabeth and I am also Hien; I am white and of color, American and Vietnamese.

Anti-oppression and antiracism work for me has always begun with my own identity. It has been the work to excavate my mind from the silt of internalized racism and the oppression of dominant culture. It has also begun with my own spirit, embracing both my yearning for wholeness and my love of this fragmented, multiple identity. In my Unitarian Universalist community faith I find companions, theology, and rituals that honor the fragments of my identities, my halves, my multi, my hyphenation, my two names.

This work is not just about courageously loving myself—it is also about courageously loving my Unitarian Universalist kin as we try to live the Beloved Community of Dr. King's dream. It is about talking with white people about racism, about supporting people of color, Latino and Latina, and multiracial within Unitarian Universalism, about "isms" and power and answering the call of love. It is about having hard conversations with ministers who understand race very differently than I do, creating worship that is multicultural and alive, that resists tokenism and essentializing. It is about shifting resources and facilitating workshops, about sharing experiences of racism and asking questions, about embracing conflict with song and prayer. It is about encountering my own limits, as an ally and an antiracist person of faith. About messing up, and failing, and about asking for forgiveness and beginning again in love.

And it is about celebration—about moments of connection across great difference. Buddhist writer Jack Kornfield writes that in meditation:

Instead of clinging to an inflated, superhuman view of perfection, we learn to allow ourselves the space of kindness. There is a beauty in the ordinary. We invite the heart to sit on the front porch and experience from a place of rest the inevitable comings and goings of emotions and events, the struggles and successes of the world.

I love this image for thinking not just about meditation, but also for talking about race across difference.

When I am in conversation with someone who I think is very different from me, I try to let go of perfection and find that space of kindness. I invite my heart out onto the front porch.

## STORY: RUSSELL

By Rev. Jose Ballester, UUA Board Liaison, Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee.

Russell was an amateur geologist, paleontologist, and professional teacher. He took his young charges on an overnight field trip. While sitting around the campfire, he brought out a bag, took out five rocks, and held up a round, grapefruit-size rock. "This rock," he began explaining, "looks ordinary on the outside. But inside there is hidden beauty."

He opened the two halves of the rock to reveal all the purple crystals inside. He then picked up another rock of equal size and opened it to reveal a fossil inside. "This is the fossil of a trilobite," Russell explained. "It was a sea creature that lived millions of years ago. All that remains is this impression of him. Minerals seeped into the mud that held his body, and this is all that remains."

Next, he picked up something that looked like a small, wooden object and said, "This branch is another fossil that looks like wood, but it really is a rock. And as we know, wood burns, but not rocks."

Russell threw the rock that looked like a branch into the fire; it did nothing. He then took out a flat, palm-sized rock and said, "Now watch closely." He threw the flat rock into the fire, and it soon began burning. "That rock is called 'oil shale' and has been used for fuel for hundreds of years."

He then began our lesson in earnest. "People can be as complex as these rocks. Too often all you see is a dull, rough exterior and never suspect there is beauty inside in the form of a crystal or a fossil. Sometimes people look like something else and behave in unexpected ways. And here is the true lesson from the rocks."

He picked up a round, black stone from a water-filled container.

"I found this stone earlier today in the stream. As you can see, the water has rounded the rock, and the minerals have turned it black." He then hit the stone with a hammer and it broke in two. "You can also see that the outside is still wet, and the water has made it round and dark, but the inside is still dry and gray. A human heart—like a stone—can be shaped by outside forces, but its inside remains unchanged. Over time, this stone will be further reduced, perhaps becoming a grain of sand that will find its way into an oyster and become a pearl. You never know what a human heart will become over time, so never lose hope in its potential."

## **STORY: SEEK JUSTICE, LOVE KINDNESS, WALK HUMBLY**

By Ellen Zemlin, a White Unitarian Universalist.

For me, there's never really been a question about whether my Unitarian Universalism and my commitment to antiracism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism are related. My introduction to justice work came sitting in a circle on the floor at youth conferences, in late-night conversations with fellow YRUUs [Young Religious Unitarian Universalists], and at Sunday School. Concepts like "collective liberation" and "inherent worth and dignity" have always walked hand in hand. The political isn't just personal—it's spiritual.

I was brought up UU and knew the Seven Principles from an early age. But it wasn't until antiracism became a large part of my life that I began to realize what the Principles really meant, and how radical a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person really is. Through this, my antiracist and anti-oppressive practice and my spiritual practice became more and more tightly intertwined. I began organizing church workshops and conferences focused on social justice. I served on denominational committees about cultural misappropriation and cross-cultural engagement. I built strong and lasting relationships with other UUs based on our common commitments. Most importantly, though, I kept on learning and growing as a person of faith and as an activist.

Through this fusion of religious community and consciousness-raising group, I learned about privilege and power, about marginality and oppression, and about the institutions and structures within our society that are built on and enable the perpetuation of these realities. But I learned more than that. I learned about radically inclusive and intentionally anti-oppressive spaces. I learned how to make mistakes—and how to be forgiven. I learned that the relationships we form with others in pursuit of liberation are the building blocks for a more just world. I learned that standing in solidarity with others is often more powerful than having others stand in solidarity with you.

Sometimes people worry that the growing emphasis on antiracism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism within our faith is beginning to eclipse the more traditionally religious aspects of it. On the contrary, I see this as a shift toward more radical and revolutionary forms of spiritual sustenance. Even though I don't attend church regularly, I find spiritual fulfillment in working together with UUs and other people of faith to build a better world. I've stayed UU because I feel called to work for a more just society, and because I feel that my denomination is doing important work toward that.

While preparing for volunteer service after college, I kept encountering a verse from the Old Testament: *What does the Lord require of you but to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?* (Micah 6:8) The theist language isn't particularly meaningful for me, but the sentiment is. What does my commitment to building radical, just, and beloved community require of me but to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly? At this point, only these things and nothing more.

# HANDOUT 1: MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

The definition is originally from Donald B. Pope-Davis, A. L. Reynolds, J. G. Dings, and T. M. Ottavi, in "Multicultural Competencies of Doctoral Interns at University Counseling Centers: An Exploratory Investigation," *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Vol. 25, pages 466—470 (1994). Modifications for the UUA were made by Paula Cole Jones to include multicultural competence in institutional change. The definition was further modified by the UUA Journey to Wholeness Transformation Committee on March 14, 2008, and published in Appendix A of the report [Snapshots on the Journey: Assessing Cultural Competence in Ministerial Formation](#).

## DEFINITION

"Cultural competence" is an appreciation of and sensitivity to the history, current needs, strengths, and resources of communities and individuals who historically have been underserved and underrepresented in our Association. Specifically, this entails:

- an awareness of one's own biases and cultural assumptions
- content knowledge about cultures different from one's own
- an accurate self-assessment of one's multicultural skills and comfort level

- an appropriate application of cultural knowledge and an awareness of the cultural assumptions underlying institutional and group processes
- an ability to make culture norms visible
- an ability to create structure that is inclusive of multiple cultural perceptions and experiences

A person who displays multicultural competence:

- can listen and behave without imposing their own values and assumptions on others
- carries an attitude of respect when approaching people of different cultures, which entails engagement in a process of self-reflection and self-critique
- has the ability to move beyond their own biases
- can maintain a communication style that is not based on being argumentative and competitive; can reach shared outcomes without manipulating or wearing down others with compelling evidence
- is curious about the other person and seeks solutions that work across shared interests
- is comfortable asking questions when uncertain or unclear about the assumptions of an individual or group
- intentionally seeks to see, hear, and understand the cultural "other"

## HANDOUT 2: MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE WORKSHEET

### Competency

### Evidence

can listen and behave without imposing their own values and assumptions on others

carries an attitude of respect when approaching people of different cultures, which entails engagement in a process of self-reflection and self-critique

has the ability to move beyond their own biases

can maintain a communication style that is not based on being argumentative and competitive; can reach shared outcomes without manipulating or wearing down others with compelling evidence

is curious about the other person and seeks solutions that work across shared interests

is comfortable asking questions when uncertain or unclear about the assumptions of an individual or group

intentionally seeks to see, hear, and understand the cultural "other"

# HANDOUT 3: THE FORT WORTH INCIDENT

## Introduction

Shortly after the 2005 General Assembly in Fort Worth, Texas, a Special Review Commission was appointed by the UUA Board and Administration to investigate "reports of distressing incidents regarding UU youth of color." In March 2006 the commission submitted a 17-page report, which opens as follows:

During the Closing Ceremony of 2005 General Assembly in Fort Worth, Texas, three youth entered the balcony area, moving about restlessly. Meeting an usher, who smiled and handed one a program, the youth threw it on the floor, walked on to another usher, asked for a program, threw it down, walked on to another usher, and did so again. To some persons—particularly adults—the youth appeared to be behaving with provocative disrespect. The youth understood their behavior differently. They were doing street theater, acting out the experience of how they had felt treated as youth, specifically as UU youth of color, at times accepted, even welcomed, and at other times thrown away like pieces of paper. "It was an act of protest, skillfully put together and humbly done, but it was a mean message; it was an evil thing to do to the ushers," one of them told us. Their enactment was a revelation of days, indeed years, of raw pain and distress, and a call to awareness that had precious little chance of being understood by most of those who would see it.

The report included a timeline of events, reconstructed from more than 80 interviews. The *UU World* story about the report stated:

. . . the timeline reports "miscommunications and misunderstandings" at a Leadership Development Conference in Dallas for youth of color the week preceding the General Assembly; a failure to reserve hotels for youth near the convention center; incidents in which GA participants mistook UU youth of color for hotel staff and others in which hotel staff ignored the needs of youth of color; a conflicted GA workshop on transracial adoption; harassment by Fort Worth police; and a confrontation between three youth of color and a white UU minister at the assembly's Closing Ceremony, leading to cancellation of an intergenerational dance scheduled later that night.

The report concluded with "The Elevator Story," which the Commission describes as a metaphor for the common understanding they reached as they did their work:

Each of us brings into every situation a personal body of experience that affects the nature of our interactions.

Here is the elevator story from the [Final Report of the Special Review Commission](#), followed by the Commission's recommendations.

## The Elevator Story: A Metaphor

In this true story, a woman of African descent recalls riding in a crowded elevator with several emotionally exhausted youth and young adults of color on the final night of General Assembly. Two of the youth had just been involved in a near-altercation with a white female minister outside of the Closing Ceremony. The elevator stopped, and as the doors opened, the woman heard a white woman yelling at the youth of color in the elevator, "If you people really want to be antiracist, you will get off the elevator now and allow this poor man to get on." The woman of African descent peered outside the doors and observed that the man in question was an older, black hotel employee with a food cart. When she looked at him, she read shame and embarrassment on his face. Meanwhile, the white woman had boarded the elevator. The woman of African descent remembers a flood of emotion. "In his eyes," she says, "I saw me." And she wondered, "What was I doing with rude, insensitive white people so far removed from *his world, my roots*?" This episode reminded her of many of the negative, race-based encounters she'd experienced within the UU community over the past 15 years. She questioned why she was a part of this faith community, but "I stayed on that elevator. I stood my ground. . . . I belonged on that elevator, too." Soon after she learned that the white woman was a UU minister, which increased her discomfort.

The white UU minister recounts the same event. She had heard only that the dance had been canceled due to incidents of racism and the youth community feeling "broken." Leaving the ballroom, she came upon an older, black hotel employee waiting at the elevator doors with a food service cart. An elevator arrived and a dozen YR UU youth hurried past him to fill it. This happened twice as she watched. The man told her that he'd been waiting for some time as this scenario repeated itself. The third time the elevator arrived and youth rushed to enter, she interrupted to ask if they would step out and let the man in. She recalls that the youth "were screaming at me that their world was broken."



She told them that if they were concerned about racism, they would care about *this* man. She reminded them that everyone at GA was privileged and urged them to look after the hotel staff. After boarding the elevator, she and the youth continued to dialogue until an adult woman of color said to her, "You need to stop now and go with your white community and talk about this."

This incident left her shaken. She was accustomed to speaking out for the underdog, she said. Although she too had attended the Closing Ceremony, "I had no clue what had happened with the youth or what I had gotten into." She described this incident as "one of the more unpleasant experiences in my entire life."

The story of the elevator demonstrates the vastly different lenses through which two women viewed the same event. While race played a factor, so had encounters immediately preceding this one and all the experiences associated with being an adult, a parent, a woman, a person of color, a white person, a person of authority, and so on. The Commission views the elevator story as a metaphor for many of the stories we were privy to during this investigation. It is our conclusion that a vital part of the effort to become a more whole and loving community involves listening to and sharing our honest perspectives—not to determine who is "right" and who is "wrong" but to identify where we have attempted to communicate with one another and simply failed. The good news is that we *are* reaching out and striving to connect. Let us be kind to each other and try again—and again, and again. Ours is a continuing story.

### **Recommendations for Our Future as a Community of Faith**

So, what have we learned?

- That racism is a pernicious problem both in our larger society and in our faith communities
- That there is no simple solution to racism and that the nature of racism is adaptive
- That there is no hierarchy to oppression and that oppressions are linked
- That we need clearly defined accountability relationships that operate in both directions
- That we need to evaluate our current antiracism, anti-oppression, multicultural programs and determine if they are meeting our needs
- That we are an imperfect association of imperfect congregations of imperfect people, but this does not excuse us from admitting our mistakes and working to rectify those mistakes

The meta-solution to all of these issues, clearly, is to live our UU Principles fully in relationship with each other.

Toward that end, we would re-envision GA as a prime venue to practice our Principles and call forth and commit GA delegates and participants of all ages to undertake this charge conscientiously. We offer these recommendations with that vision foremost in mind.

The Special Review Commission recommends the following:

- All GA participants are asked to wear and display nametags at GA events, regardless of identity and (assumed) status.
- GA materials will include information that will sensitize attendees to the cultural settings of the site and of GA itself and a request that attendees live our Principles in all interactions with everyone they encounter.
- Participants are urged to come prepared to practice hospitality, greeting one another as members of a religious community and behaving as gracious guests.
- Delegates are explicitly invited to learn from and minister to the uniquely diverse Unitarian Universalist environment that is GA.
- Program planners will continue to recognize and celebrate the panoramic diversity that is Unitarian Universalism at its principled best (while becoming aware and wary of tokenism) and will offer opportunities for individuals to explore their own personal identities and claim the fullness of their blessings and challenges.
- A written protocol is adopted to aid participants of all ages, specifically including youth, in seeking help when serious problems arise, including a contact list of chaplains, pertinent UUA staff, the GA Planning Committee, identity-based affiliates, and allies.
- Program planners are encouraged to consult with chaplains and other qualified leaders about potentially stressful events that may need the services of chaplains and/or counselors.
- There is greater availability of well-trained, identifiable, visible, and proactive chaplains for youth.
- Programs are developed that chronicle and demonstrate models for successful youth activism in the movement and celebrate the history of youth presence and influence on GA.
- Planners of youth programming will consider the existing time and energy commitments of youth leaders when asking them to take on more responsibilities, and youth will feel authorized to

set limits on their spiritual and emotional energies and practice good self-care.

- Parents and sponsors will connect with their young people daily and provide them with a safe space for debriefing, deep listening, and rest.
- Youth are included in all levels of GA planning.
- Basic conflict resolution and communication skills training will become a regular, ongoing part of UUA, district, and congregational programming.
- All Unitarian Universalists will be encouraged to wear nametags when we gather at conferences and congregational events.

## LEADER RESOURCE 1: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE JOURNEY

By Pat Schneider, from *Another River: New and Selected Poems* (Amherst Writers and Artists Press, 2005). Used with permission.

The self you leave behind  
is only a skin you have outgrown.  
Don't grieve for it.  
Look to the wet, raw, unfinished  
self, the one you are becoming.  
The world, too, sheds its skin:  
politicians, cataclysm, ordinary days.  
It is easy to lose this tenderly  
unfolding moment. Look for it  
as if it were the first green blade  
after a long winter. Listen for it  
as if it were the first clear tone  
in a place where dawn is heralded by bells.  
And, if all that fails,  
wash your own dishes. Rinse them.  
Stand in your kitchen at your sink.  
Let cold water run between your fingers.  
Feel it.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

The UUA Multicultural Growth & Witness staff group offers resources, curricula, trainings, and tools to help Unitarian Universalist congregations and leaders

engage in the work of antiracism, antioppression, and multiculturalism. Visit [www.uua.org/multiculturalism](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism) or email [multicultural @ uua.org](mailto:multicultural@uua.org) to learn more.

everyday life by creating skits and leading follow-up discussions.

## WORKSHOP 7: RESISTANCE

### INTRODUCTION

*The work of building a just community means individually and collectively working in right relationship with people of historically marginalized groups and holding ourselves accountable for changing the things that create injustice. — Paula Cole Jones, contemporary Unitarian Universalist educator and antiracism trainer*

This workshop presents contemporary stories involving Unitarian Universalist young adults that illustrate different approaches to resisting racism and systems of privilege and strengthening multicultural competency skills.

Participants work in groups to create skits that illustrate day-to-day scenarios involving issues of race and privilege, and consider how to become better able to respond to similar situations they encounter in their own lives.

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

### GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce different approaches to resisting racism and systems of privilege and provide real-life illustrations of three approaches
- Provide models geared toward young adults for resisting racism and systems of privilege and working to build the multicultural world we dream about
- Provide practice with everyday scenarios to increase multicultural competence.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about different approaches to resisting racism and systems of privilege
- Become familiar with the antiracism, anti-oppression, multicultural work of some Unitarian Universalist young adults
- Apply knowledge about multicultural competence and privilege to scenarios from

### WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Three Strategies for Resistance	10
Activity 2: Intentional Antiracist, Anti-Oppressive, Multicultural Community	20
Activity 3: Prophetic Witness	20
Activity 4: Practicing Resistance Through Skits	60
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: No More Deaths	40

### SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read Handout 1, Three Strategies for Resistance and reflect on the three strategies in your own life, using these questions:

- Have you personally experienced these different ways of resisting racism and systems of privilege based on ethnic or racial identity?
- Do you tend toward one strategy over another? Why?
- How do you feel about the different approaches?

Often, we have very strong opinions about the "right" way to do things, and this can lead us to believe that our way is the only way or the correct way. As you prepare to lead the workshop, consider how you will respond when participants value one approach over another.

### OPENING (5 MINUTES)

#### Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1, [Kindness](#) (included in this document)
- List of this workshop's goals
- Covenant established in Workshop 1

## Description of Activity

Light the chalice or invite a participant to light it while you read Leader Resource 1 aloud. Remind participants of the spirit of their covenant. Share the goals of this workshop.

## ACTIVITY 1: THREE STRATEGIES FOR RESISTANCE (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Three Strategies for Resistance](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Review Handout 1 and make copies for participants.

### Description of Activity

Tell participants they will look at different approaches to resisting racism and systems of privilege based on ethnic and/or racial identity.

Distribute Handout 1 and invite participants to read it. Ask three volunteers to read the definitions of each approach aloud. Point out that the term "voice" can refer to either the voice of one person or the collective voice of a group representing one agenda.

Ask participants to recall the story of the Fort Worth incident from Workshop 6. Point out that the people involved in the task force and the UUA staff and Board used an "institutional" approach to resisting racism. They worked within established power structures to change them from within. Say:

We are going to explore the stories of two Unitarian Universalist young adults who used the other two strategies for resistance: the parallel and the prophetic.

## ACTIVITY 2: INTENTIONAL ANTIRACIST, ANTI-OPPRESSIVE, MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Highlander School](#) (included in this document)"

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy the story for all participants.

### Description of Activity

Read the story "Highlander School" aloud or ask a volunteer to do so. Lead a discussion of the story, using these questions as a guide:

- How does the work of Highlander School illustrate a parallel approach to resistance?

- How is "community" key to Highlander's approach—both the community developed at the folk school and the communities represented by those at the folk school?
- How does the work of building community at Highlander transform those who participate? How does it transform society and work against racism and systems of privilege?
- What in this story inspires you or gives you hope?
- Have you ever been part of a similar experience?

## ACTIVITY 3: PROPHETIC WITNESS (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Audre Lorde Project](#) (included in this document)"

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy the story for all participants.

### Description of Activity

Read the story "The Audre Lorde Project" aloud or ask a volunteer to do so. Lead a discussion of the story, using these questions to guide you:

- How is the work of the Audre Lorde Project an example of prophetic resistance?
- How does this project seek to transform society and work against systems of racism and privilege?
- What insights did you gain from this story about the nature of racism, oppression, and privilege?
- What in this story inspires you or gives you hope?
- Does anything in the story remind you of any of your own experiences?

## ACTIVITY 4: PRACTICING RESISTANCE THROUGH SKITS (60 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- List of reflection group members from Workshop 3, Activity 4
- Workshop 6, Handout 2, [Multicultural Competence Worksheet](#) (included in this document)

- Handout 2, [Procedure for Creating Your Skit](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Variety of simple costume pieces for skits (such as scarves, fabric pieces, and hats)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy both handouts for all participants.
- Review the reflection group assignments you established in Workshop 3 and make any needed changes so that you will have four groups. Or, form new groups based on the guidelines in the program Introduction. List members of the reflection groups on newsprint and post the list where all participants can see it. Under each group, write one of the following practices that build multicultural competence:
  - Develop personal cultural awareness of groups and people who are not like you
  - Acquire specific knowledge about individuals and groups from other cultures and affiliations
  - Maintain a receptive attitude and openness to all forms of diversity
  - Cultivate a passion for multicultural settings and intercultural engagement
- Arrange appropriate spaces for reflection groups to meet—in different rooms, if possible, to avoid the natural tendency to eavesdrop on other conversations.
 

Note: There is only enough time for three or four skits to be presented and adequately discussed. If your group is larger than 20, consider dividing the large group in half and then subdividing each half into small groups. Arrange for two different large spaces for acting out and discussing the scenarios.
- Optional: Gather and set out costume items.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 2, Multicultural Competence Worksheet from Workshop 6, and call attention to the reflection group lists you have posted. Explain the activity using these or similar words:

Each reflection group is invited to focus on one practice that builds multicultural competence and to create a skit where this practice—or the lack of it—comes to life. You will have 20 minutes to create and practice your skit and prepare to lead a discussion afterward.

Distribute Handout 2, Procedure for Creating Your Skit. Invite each reflection group to create a skit and prepare to lead a follow-up discussion. Allow 20 minutes for this part of the activity.

Have each group present its skit to the large group. Invite the audience to view the skit with an eye toward learning something about the practice or skill.

After each skit is presented, invite the actors to lead a discussion.

After all skits have been presented, engage the group in further discussion by posing these questions:

- What did you learn?
- How can these learnings be incorporated into our spiritual, personal, and professional lives?

## CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [The Singing of Angels](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Taking It Home for all participants.

### Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to do the suggested activities before the next meeting. Offer Leader Resource 2 as a closing and extinguish the chalice.

### Including All Participants

Prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home for participants who may be visually impaired.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few moments right after the workshop to check in with each other. Ask yourselves:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do we need to make changes in the way we work together?

## TAKING IT HOME

The work of building a just community means individually and collectively working in right relationship with people of historically marginalized groups and holding ourselves accountable for changing the things that create injustice. — Paula Cole Jones, contemporary

Unitarian Universalist educator and antiracism trainer

Notice in your own life where you participate—or could participate—in activities that promote multicultural competence. Explore and make a list of opportunities that present themselves and practical things you can do in order to accomplish the following:

- Develop personal cultural awareness of groups and people who are not like you
- Acquire specific knowledge about individuals and groups from other cultures and affiliations
- Maintain a receptive attitude and openness to all forms of diversity
- Build your cross-cultural and multicultural communication skills
- Cultivate a passion for multicultural settings and intercultural engagement.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: NO MORE DEATHS (40 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Story, "[No More Deaths](#) (included in this document)"
- Computer with Internet access

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Copy the story for all participants.
- Preview the podcast "[Life or Litter? The Value of People and Hope](#)" (approximately 20 minutes).  
Test computer equipment and cue the podcast to share with the group.

### **Description of Activity**

Distribute the story, "No More Deaths." Read it aloud, or invite a volunteer to do so. Update the story by saying, in these words or your own:

Emrys Staton was sentenced to 300 hours of community service shortly before he left for seminary. After he began the service work, he felt uncomfortable with doing it, and he sent the judge a letter, saying that he believed that his work with No More Deaths already constituted community service and that he would not be completing the court's sentence. The judge replied that Staton could choose to continue the community service, or he could spend 600 hours—about 25 days—in federal prison. In the fall of 2010, an appeals court overturned the conviction, stating that a gallon jug of water did not fit the legal definition of "garbage." Staton continues his humanitarian work with No More

Deaths during his breaks from school. He graduated from seminary in May 2012.

Explain that you will listen to a podcast of Emrys Staton's sermon, "Life or Litter? The Value of People and Hope," delivered at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson on July 19, 2009, and let them know that at the time Staton was using the first name "Walt." Play the podcast.

Discuss the podcast as a group, using these questions to guide you:

- How is the work of No More Deaths an example of a prophetic approach to resistance?
- How does the work of No More Deaths aim to transform society and work against racism and systems of privilege?
- Why is it important to Staton that No More Deaths is a faith-based organization? What UU values are reflected in the organization's work?
- Staton says that he doesn't want others to feel "suffocated by the weight of this situation." What thoughts or insights do you have in response to his words, particularly for those who are not in a position to engage in the kind of prophetic witness that Staton demonstrated with his actions?
- What does his call to "not turn away" from injustice mean to you in your life at this time?



## STORY: HIGHLANDER SCHOOL

By Elandria Williams, a Black Unitarian Universalist.

The Highlander Research and Education Center is an 80-year-old popular education center in the mountains of East Tennessee, which serves as a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement-building in Appalachia and the South. The center supports the efforts of those fighting for justice, equality, and sustainability to take collective action to shape their own destiny. It was founded in 1932 by young adult radical ministers who wanted to start a school in the South modeled on the Danish folk school movement of the early 1900s, which showed students that they could make change and love their communities. The center has been and is at the forefront of movement and social change work in the South, Appalachia, the United States, and the world.

I first came on to Highlander's land as a kid playing at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church picnics. Myles Horton, the founder of Highlander, was a member of our church. I attended the children's camp one summer and other events over the years. For the past five and a half years, I have worked at Highlander, which has afforded me the opportunity to learn from, grow, and build multiracial progressive organizations and movements for positive social change. I am now an Education Team member and the coordinator of [Seeds of Fire](#), our youth, young adult, and intergenerational program.

Highlander's mission since the beginning has been to bring grassroots leaders together across race, age, and community to build a broader movement for change. In the early years the focus was on economics, which included building cooperatives and labor unions. During the civil rights movement, Highlander trained leaders in the citizenship schools. In the 1970s and '80s, Highlander brought together people working against toxic waste dumping and strip mining. In the 1990s, the focus shifted to NAFTA and the impact of globalization and immigration. In the 2000s, the organization has reaffirmed the importance of youth development and organizing as well as the power of those who are directly impacted when they work together across identities to develop community power and act to shape their communities.

We who are part of Highlander believe that through popular education, participatory research, cultural organizing, and language justice we can have a profound impact, helping to create the world we wish to see. Popular education is a type of education that leads to action, based on the idea that education is not neutral. You are either teaching in deference to the status quo, or you are engaging in liberation education

and critical analysis. Following the model of educators Paulo Freire, Howard Zinn, and Myles Horton, popular education encourages local community leaders to work *with* their community to research problems and issues *in* their community, and then to work to build their community's capacity to advocate for changes in policies and practices that benefit the community as a whole. Community leaders work strategically with art and culture so that organizing campaigns honor and credit the base community from which they arose. Leaders practice intergenerational organizing and build multilingual capacity so that all members of the community can participate, regardless of language and age. All of these practices support the development of antiracist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural communities that engage in political education, promote social healing, and serve to accompany those who are oppressed as witnesses and allies.

When I think about all of the programs, workshops, and opportunities to serve as a witness and ally of which I have been part during my time at Highlander, what stands out to me is not just the campaign wins that organizations have achieved, but how movement "family" has been built as people come together across divides that they never thought they could break and connections are formed—not just within communities, but between and among them.

I remember my first Seeds of Fire camp in 2007, where youth and adult allies from across the South gathered to work together. Although members of the group committed to working across identity and against oppression both at the camp and back home, at first everyone stayed in their own cliques and worked with those who were comfortable for them. As the camp experience began, people were nervous about sharing a dorm or group activity with people who were not from their organization. This was especially true around language and culture: The Latino and Latina kids bunched together, the Black youth bunched together, and the queer youth of color had a clique. Although gathering in affinity groups had some benefit (for example, most of queer youth of color came from rural spaces and needed to see and be around other queer youth of color), the Seeds of Fire staff were committed to helping young people find common experiences that would ground their work together. Common ground emerged through a workshop that Power U of Miami, Florida, led about the criminalization of youth in schools. Every single one of the young people at the camp had been criminalized for wearing a rosary or a hoodie, for being perceived as a threat, or because of their sexuality and gender identity. Finding commonalities through sharing stories of how they had each been treated in schools created a sense of togetherness. That togetherness was enhanced by sharing dances, songs, food, and stories of their community work over the

following days. At lunch times, YouthPride out of Atlanta held a GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) session, and JASMYN from Jacksonville challenged everyone about Transgender rights. During the middle of the week, after a powerful workshop about immigration and the Dream Act led by undocumented youth fighting to change laws, some of the adult allies in their 20s and early 30s proposed dialogue about oppression and healing through theater. With my support, youth ensemble members of Carpetbag Theater, an African American theater troupe from Knoxville, Tennessee, led a process whereby people bore witness to each other's stories, supporting each other and singing through pain. The personal and the political were both brought into the room; the process allowed a young woman from Palestine to share her experiences with the Intifada, a young woman from El Salvador to share what it meant to live through the civil war as a youth fighter, another young man from Guatemala to share about his mother's and his possible deportation, and a young man to share about sexual assault that occurred in his home. That first round of stories led to many more rounds of growing together in community.

Now, when I go to North Carolina and see one of the leaders in the Dream movement, I recall him in that room five years ago. I think of the many other amazing young people that are running community organizations and moving the work forward—building community that stopped repressive legislation 287(g) [federal legislation authorizing law enforcement officers to identify, process, and detain immigration offenders] in counties throughout the South, stopped youth prisons from being built, started Gay Straight Alliance-type meetings in rural Mississippi, and more. That work of that one Seeds of Fire experience has multiplied out so many times that sometimes I just sit back in amazement and think about the many connections, relationships, and changes that have occurred—and also the changes that still need to happen.

Highlander believes, and I believe, that the main job of a popular educator is to get the right people in the room and to create a space whereby people quickly get out of their comfort zones and go deep in powerful and profound ways. In order to create liberating communities, it is crucial to develop youth and young adult leaders that critically analyze the world around them, get politically educated, both in congregations and in community organizations, and build movements for social change. While Unitarian Universalist communities that I work with do not always share the life situations of the leaders at Highlander, some of the most powerful leaders and organizers that I have worked with are Unitarian Universalist young adult leaders who are pushing toward the Beloved Community and working to create multiracial, anti-oppressive, antiracist communities both in congregations and out in the world.

I close with a quote from Septima Poinsette Clark, who was the Education Director at Highlander during the early civil rights movement. She said:

I am not weaving my life's pattern alone. Only one end of the threads do I hold in my hands. The other ends go many ways, linking my life with others.

## STORY: NO MORE DEATHS

From "UU Convicted of Littering While Supplying Humanitarian Aid" by Jane Greer, *UU World*, June 15, 2009. Used with permission. The subject of the story is a White Unitarian Universalist who currently uses the name "Emrys Staton."

Next fall, Walt Staton will be starting divinity school to become a Unitarian Universalist minister—or in jail for littering.

On June 4, the 27-year-old UU was convicted by a federal court in Tucson of "knowingly littering" for leaving water jugs in the 118,000-acre Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge in southern Arizona. Staton is part of a humanitarian aid group called No More Deaths, which supplies water, food, and first aid to migrants walking across the desert.

Founded in 2003, No More Deaths [NMD] is a ministry of the 300-member UU Church of Tucson. In addition to congregants, the organization also draws members from the community. NMD's mission is two-fold, including advocacy for migrant rights as well as the distribution of water and other supplies.

NMD operates from a base camp in the Sonoran Desert that was donated to the organization for its use. Desert conditions can be harsh, with daytime temperatures in the summer rising over 100 degrees and winter temperatures falling below freezing at night.

NMD volunteers stay at the camp and go out twice a day to distribute water and supplies. Each water bottle is dated and marked with its GPS coordinates. Volunteers note how many bottles have been used, where they've been found, and whether they see migrants on their rounds.

"A few years back, we would rarely come across migrants," Staton said. "They traveled mostly at night. But around a year and a half ago, the border patrol completed a new section of the wall. Literally, as soon as it was done, it funneled people into the area we actively patrol. We began seeing nearly a hundred people a week."

The group collects the empty bottles and then cleans and reuses them. Although the ministry began by supplying water during the summer months, it now has groups that go out weekly during the rest of the year.

At their camp, NMD offers basic first aid services, clean socks, food, water, and information. One of the things they warn people about is drinking contaminated water from water tanks in the desert. The group will also arrange medical evacuations, if necessary, and will call the border patrol if people decide they would rather be repatriated. "We once met a Mexican policeman who

had gotten laid off," said Fran Brazzell, president of the church's board of trustees and an NMD volunteer. "He was walking across the desert in his boots, which were inadequate, and had gotten horrible blisters. He came into our camp for humanitarian aid—to have his blisters treated and get rehydrated. He asked to go back. He was very cheerful but emotional. It was a difficult decision."

"Many migrants don't realize how harsh conditions are in the desert," she continued. "Many of them live in a tropical climate with plenty of water and shade."

But hazards are not all environmental. Brazzell said that it was not uncommon to come across a tree in the desert with a bra hanging from it. "They're called trophy trees," she said. "Because a woman was raped by a guide there."

Many of the migrants making the crossing are hoping to be reunited with their families, Staton said. Immigration raids have resulted in the deportation of thousands of undocumented workers. "People who have lived their whole lives in the United States are just trying to get back to their families."

NMD also advocates for custody standards and treatment of migrants. NMD members go to court in Tucson every Tuesday morning to observe "Operation Streamline," which are mass deportation hearings. They also volunteer at repatriation centers along the border.

"We've had a lot of people come up to us and ask, 'Are you the people who put the water jugs out?'" Staton said. "And then they say, 'I thought I was going to die and I found your water. We really feel lucky we found your water.'"

Dan Millis, another NMD volunteer, was convicted of littering in September 2008. His case is currently under appeal at the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Staton will be sentenced August 4. The maximum punishment is a fine of \$10,000 and up to one year in jail. Staton is planning to appeal.

NMD plans to continue its work, despite Staton's conviction. "We don't believe that we're doing anything illegal [by] providing humanitarian support for people who are dying," Brazzell said. "We don't see how that can be illegal."

## STORY: THE AUDRE LORDE PROJECT

By India McKnight, a Black Unitarian Universalist.

"Honey, those girls were being chased for at least half a mile once school got out," Ms. Myra recalled. I shook my head knowingly. We had just walked out of the subway station across the street from Boys and Girls High School and were listening to the owner of Cafe 258, one of our original safe spaces.

She went on: "Since business was somewhat slow, I was standing in the doorway and saw them down the block, running toward me. I heard the boys yelling, 'Dyke,' 'You think you a dude', cursing and carrying on. When the girls got closer I opened the door of the shop, pulled them inside, and locked the door. Those boys banged on my windows so much I thought they would break them. After about 15 minutes they left. I fixed the girls some hot chocolate and called their parents. I don't know why folks act out like that, but not on my block!"

*Not on my block, not in my neighborhood, not if I am aware of what is happening.* This is the aim of the Safe Neighborhood Campaign created by the Audre Lorde Project, a New York City-based community organizing center for people of color who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and gender-variant. The Safe Neighborhood Campaign was started by the Safe Outside the System collective, one of three working groups at the Audre Lorde Project. Its mission is to work within People of Color communities to end violence against LGBTQ people. The Safe Neighborhood Campaign engages communities in developing a deeper level of accountability for one another. We recruit local businesses and community nonprofits as safe spaces and safe havens for the neighborhood. A "safe space" is one in which the employer and employees are willing to intervene in the harassment of LGBTQ people inside as well as outside of their place of work or business. A "safe haven" is a place in which community members can seek refuge from the threat of harassment and physical violence. Ms. Myra turned her coffee shop into a safe haven that day and continues to do so.

Audre Lorde Project members have gotten somewhat used to the looks or comments directed toward them as they walk through the neighborhoods together. The most negative interactions have not been about our perceived sexual orientation or gender identity but rather about the shades of our skin. Our multiracial group can definitely stand out in racially homogeneous neighborhoods whose demographics are slowly shifting. Most of our members identify under the umbrella term People of Color, a term that implies a solidarity across cultures for people who are marginalized by race or ethnicity. We also have to acknowledge the ways in which internalized

racism still divides us, both within our specific racial or ethnic groups and across groups.

The divisions are made apparent by our interactions with business owners or community organizations as we recruit them for our Safe Neighborhood Campaign. I have a pretty good relationship with the owner of a local bookstore, so I thought it would be great to recruit the bookstore as a safe space. At the time, I was training one of our new members in the process of recruiting safe spaces, so I asked him to come along. Although Thomas and I arrived together, the owner stopped me as I began to speak about the campaign and said, "Are we actually going to talk about this in front of him? He's the problem." "What? What do you mean?" I asked. The bookstore owner replied, "Those white folks are moving in here, bringing the police and causing the violence against our people." Thomas identifies as Hapa, meaning that he is both Asian (Japanese) and white. I identify as African American, as does the bookstore owner. Thomas interjected, "Sir, I'm not white, I'm bi-racial, half Japanese, and I'm very invested in ending the violence against folks in the community. It's where I live." The owner silently shook his head, so we decided that we would follow up another time. Although it would have been easy to dismiss him, we realize that meeting folks where they are and continuing the dialogue is a vital part of the process of creating safer neighborhoods. Thomas and I debriefed our experience, discussing the way that assumptions about our racial identities have affected our ability to make cross-cultural connections. We made sure to share this experience with the other members of the collective and learned to intentionally identify our members as invested community leaders when introducing them to safe space owners.

As I work on the campaign, I'm reminded of what Tracy, another safe space owner, says about the neighborhood:

In this community, we are not going to all look the same, go to the same church, or eat the same food, but we have a responsibility to look out for one another regardless.

This organizing campaign at the Audre Lorde Project calls us to redefine community across identities and cultures. We have learned that we need to engage one another in order to survive as business owners, as community organizations, and as human beings.

## HANDOUT 1: THREE STRATEGIES FOR RESISTANCE

Adapted from *Resistance and Transformation: Unitarian Universalist Social Justice History* by Rev. Colin Bossen and Rev. Julia Hamilton.

Not all change is effected in the same way. There is more than one way to resist racism and systems of privilege, and more than one way to work for the transformation of our world.

This workshop explores three approaches commonly found in social justice leadership and organization, including resistance to racism and privilege: the prophetic, the parallel, and the institutional:

*Prophetic* voices speak out or act publicly against what they perceive to be wrong or unjust. They are often marginalized or considered ahead of their time, with a strong vision of a better future.

*Parallel* voices advocate for an alternative to the established structure, a new system to replace that which is deemed broken.

*Institutional* voices seek to work within established power structures to change them from within.

Each of these approaches may be voiced by an individual, a group, or a movement, and individuals, groups, and movements may employ different approaches at different times. All three strategic approaches are grounded in the shared Unitarian and Universalist conviction that a free faith demands critical engagement with the world.

## HANDOUT 2: PROCEDURE FOR CREATING YOUR SKIT

- Choose a timekeeper to keep the group on task. You will have 20 minutes to create your skit and prepare to lead a discussion afterward.
- Each person in your small reflection group will share a personal experience where the multicultural skill or practice was either absent or well done. Limit yourself to a brief, one-minute story.
- Choose the story that best exemplifies the multicultural skill or practice and that can best accommodate all the members of your group in a skit.
- Create a skit that lasts no more than three minutes. It should focus on a specific problem (not multiple issues that are complicated and difficult to discern). Ask yourselves, "Is this skit believable?"
- Make the skit action-packed: Move! Gesture! Demonstrate!
- Practice the skit once, from beginning to end.
- Prepare to lead a discussion after the skit, using these or similar questions: What happened in the skit? What multicultural competence did you see enacted? Where was there opportunity for multicultural competence that was not enacted, but could have been?

## LEADER RESOURCE 1: KINDNESS

By Naomi Shihab Nye, from *Words Under the Words: Selected Poems* (Far Corner Books, Portland, OR, 1995).

Before you know what kindness really is  
you must lose things,  
feel the future dissolve in a moment  
like salt in a weakened broth.  
What you held in your hand,  
What you counted and carefully saved,  
all this must go so you know  
how desolate the landscape can be  
between the regions of kindness.  
How you ride and ride  
thinking the bus will never stop,  
the passengers eating maize and chicken  
will stare out the window forever.  
Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,  
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho  
lies dead by the side of the road.  
You must see how this could be you,  
how he too was someone  
who journeyed through the night with plans  
and the simple breath that kept him alive.  
Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,  
You must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.  
You must wake up with sorrow.  
You must speak to it till your voice  
catches the thread of all sorrows  
and you see the size of the cloth.  
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,  
only kindness that ties your shoes  
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and  
purchase bread,  
only kindness that raises its head  
from the crowd of the world to say  
It is I you have been looking for,  
and then goes with you everywhere

## **LEADER RESOURCE 2: THE SINGING OF ANGELS**

By Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, author, philosopher, theologian, educator and civil rights leader.

There must be always remaining in every life some place for the singing of angels, some place for that which in itself is breathlessly beautiful and—by an inherent prerogative, throwing all the rest of life into a new and creative relatedness—something that gathers up in itself all the freshets of experience from drab and commonplace areas of living and glows in one bright light of penetrating beauty and meaning, then passes. The commonplace is shot through with new glory, old burdens become lighter, deep and ancient wounds lose much of their old, old hurting. A crown is placed over our heads that for the rest of our lives we are trying to grow tall enough to wear. Despite all the crassness of life, despite all the hardness of life, despite all the hard discords of life, life is saved by the singing of angels.



## **FIND OUT MORE**

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engage in the work of antiracism, antioppression, and multiculturalism. Visit [www.uua.org/multiculturalism](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism) or email [multicultural @ uua.org](mailto:multicultural@uua.org) to learn more.

# WORKSHOP 8: COMMITMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

*We humans are deeply, fundamentally, inescapably, relational beings. Our spirituality, our experiences of the sacred, revolves around how we relate to ourselves, to each other, to the cosmos. — Rev. Peter Morales, in Bringing Gifts, a publication of the Latino/Latina Unitarian Universalist Networking Alliance*

This workshop invites participants to reflect on their experiences in Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults and to consider the commitments they each will make to continue the work going forward. The program ends with a worship service the group plans together that provides space for participants to bear witness to one another's experiences and commitments and to celebrate the work the group has done together.

If there are musicians in your group, invite them to bring along their instruments. You may also opt to recruit a volunteer musician who will serve as accompanist for the worship service.

Before leading this workshop, review the accessibility guidelines in the program Introduction under Integrating All Participants.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Bring closure to the series of experiential learning and reflection workshops in the program as participants develop personal commitments or action plans to build on what they have learned from exploring racism, racial equity, and multicultural issues
- Engage participants in planning and presenting a worship service to share reflections and commitments and celebrate the group's work together.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reflect on their experiences and their learning in the Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults program
- Make commitments for how they will carry the work forward

- Bear witness to one another's commitments and offer support
- Plan and conduct a worship service to offer reflections and commitments and celebrate the group's work together.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Reflections and Commitments	45
Activity 2: Planning the Closing Worship Service	40
Closing	30

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

As you prepare to lead this final workshop, spend some time reflecting on how your own understanding of and commitment to antiracism and multiculturalism have deepened. Consider the following questions:

- How has facilitation of the workshops been a spiritual practice for you?
- How has it touched you?

What would you tell a friend or colleague about your experience?

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1, [The Shaking of the Foundations](#) (included in this document)
- List of this workshop's goals
- Covenant established in Workshop 1

### Preparation for Activity

- Practice reading Leader Resource 1, The Shaking of the Foundations aloud.
- Post the workshop goals and the group covenant where all participants can see them.
- Optional: Arrange for someone to take a group photo. (If you opt to do this, allow a bit more time for the Opening.)

## Description of Activity

Light the chalice or invite a participant to light it while you read Leader Resource 1 aloud. Remind participants of the spirit of their covenant. Share the goals of this workshop.

If you are taking a group photo, do so now.

## ACTIVITY 1: REFLECTIONS AND COMMITMENTS (45 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Participant journals and pens or pencils
- Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3, [Serial Testimony Protocol](#)
- Workshop 5, Leader Resource 1, [About Race-Based Reflection Groups](#)
- Small object or talking stick for each small group

### Preparation for Activity

- Write the following questions on newsprint and post them where all participants can see them:
  - What questions or puzzlements do I still have?
  - What am I wrestling with?
  - What will be my next step in strengthening my own multicultural competency and/or my ability to resist racism and systems of privilege?
  - What actions do I need to take to move my work forward? What is my first step? What comes next?
  - How can I sustain my commitment to doing antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural work?
  - What support do I need, and from whom?
- Review Workshop 3, Leader Resource 3, Serial Testimony Protocol and Workshop 5, Leader Resource 1, About Race-based Reflection Groups.
- Decide which spaces the groups will use. Groups should meet in separate rooms so they cannot hear each other's discussions.

### Description of Activity

Call attention to the posted questions and invite participants to journal in response to one or more of them. Explain that there will be opportunities both in small groups and in worship to name out loud the commitments each person will make to continuing the

work of building the world we dream about. Allow 15 minutes for journaling and personal reflection.

Review the rationale for race-based reflection groups or caucuses, using the information in Workshop 5, Leader Resource 1. Invite each participant to choose one of three groups:

People who are White

People of Color and those from racially or ethnically marginalized groups

Biracial or multiracial people or people who find they are not able to identify with the White or People of Color groups

Note: If you chose not to use racial or ethnic identity-based reflection groups, invite participants to move into the small reflection groups established in Workshop 3.

Indicate where each group will meet. Review the serial testimony protocol. Explain that each participant will have up to five minutes to share some reflections on the posted questions. Participants should use the serial testimony protocol to keep the group on track.

## ACTIVITY 2: PLANNING THE CLOSING WORSHIP SERVICE (40 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Planning the Worship Service](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Planning the Worship Service.
- Optional: Recruit a guest musical accompanist and invite them to arrive near the end of your planning time so you can orient them before the worship service begins.

### Description of Activity

Introduce the activity using these or similar words:  
We are going to plan a worship service to create a sacred space for us to share our reflections about the experience of this program with one another and to bear witness to each of our commitments to move forward with the work of building the world we dream about.

Distribute Handout 1, Planning the Worship Service. Invite participants to consider their own journal entries as well as the questions on the handout. Ask:

- Which questions resonate most deeply with your own experience?
- What story would you like to tell about your participation in this program?

Invite everyone to work together to plan a service that will run less than 30 minutes. Use the suggested order of service in Handout 1 as a guide. Encourage participants to record the plan on newsprint. Decide whether to establish an order for reflections or to let people speak as the spirit moves them. Choose the music for the service, referring to *Singing the Living Tradition* as needed. If the group includes musicians, ask if they have musical selections they would like to offer. If you have recruited a guest musician, prepare to welcome and orient that person as to your plans.

## CLOSING (30 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Final Evaluation](#) (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home as needed, and make copies for all participants.
- Copy Handout 2, Final Evaluation for all participants or plan to e-mail it to the group.

### Description of Activity

Conduct the worship service you planned.

Distribute Taking It Home and Handout 2 (unless you plan to email it), calling attention to the request for evaluation and feedback. Thank participants for their investment in the program. Extinguish the chalice.

### Including All Participants

Prepare a large-print version of Taking It Home for participants who may be visually impaired.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few moments right after the workshop to check in with each other. Ask yourselves:

- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the workshop? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How will each of us continue this work going forward?

## TAKING IT HOME

We humans are deeply, fundamentally, inescapably, relational beings. Our spirituality, our experiences of the sacred, revolves around how we relate to ourselves, to each other, to the cosmos. — Rev. Peter Morales, in *Bringing Gifts*, a publication of the Latino/Latina Unitarian Universalist Networking Alliance

Set aside some time to reflect on the experience of participating in Building the World We Dream About for Young Adults.

Complete Handout 2, Final Evaluation and send it to [e-mail address].

# HANDOUT 1: PLANNING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

*Plan a worship service that inspires participants and allows them to bear witness to one another's commitments to take on the work of building antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural communities and groups in all areas of your lives. Use the questions and template below as a guide.*

## I. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What stories do you wish to tell as individuals? As a group?
- What practices did you use or create during Building the World We Dream About that helped you learn and grow? How could you incorporate those methods into your worship?
- What music, readings, film, poetry, etc. inspired you over the course of the workshops?
- Have you written journal entries that exemplify your journey?
- What wisdom or strategies do you want to share?
- How has your journey transformed how you think about yourself? The groups and communities of which you are a part?
- What new commitments are required as a result of what you have learned?

## II. SUGGESTED ORDER OF WORSHIP

### OPENING READING

In my vision of a Beloved Community, I see a dazzling, light-filled, breathtakingly beautiful mosaic, a gigantic, all-encompassing mosaic, where each of us can see, can really see, and deeply appreciate each piece. We know that each piece is of immeasurable value. We know that each piece is part of a larger whole, a larger whole that would not be whole, indeed would not BE, without each piece shining through, and being seen and appreciated as its unique self.  
— Marla Scharf, First Unitarian Church of San Jose, California

### OPENING HYMN

Choose a hymn that speaks to the journey you have undertaken and will continue. Possibilities in *Singing the Living Tradition* include "I'm On My Way" (Hymn 116) and "Guide My Feet" (Hymn 348).

### EXPRESSIONS OF OUR EXPERIENCE

Choose three or four people to share a two- or three-minute reflection on their experience.

## MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

### HYMN

Choose a hymn that acknowledges how challenging this work has been and will be and expresses a promise to continue—a quieter, more meditative hymn, such as "Spirit of Life" (Hymn 123) or "There Is More Love Somewhere" (Hymn 95).

### EXPRESSIONS OF OUR EXPERIENCE

Choose three or four people to share a two- or three-minute reflection on their experience.

## MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

### HYMN

Choose a hymn that speaks to how joyful and soul-enriching this work has been and will be. Possibilities in *Singing the Living Tradition* include "For All That Is Our Life" (Hymn 128) and "I've Got Peace Like a River" (Hymn 100).

### EXPRESSIONS OF OUR EXPERIENCE

Choose three or four people to share a two- or three-minute reflection on their experience.

## MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

### COMMITMENTS

Invite participants, as they are moved, to give voice to a commitment they make to continue this work and to light a candle.

### CLOSING HYMN

Choose an upbeat hymn that expresses hope, such as "We'll Build a Land" (Hymn 121; consider using the alternate words to the chorus from Workshop 5, Handout 5), "Love Will Guide Us" (Hymn 131), or "One More Step" (Hymn 168; consider replacing the word "step" with "move" to fully include people with mobility limitations).

### CLOSING WORDS

If you are who you were,  
and if the person next to you is who he or she was,  
if none of us has changed  
since the day we came in here—  
we have failed.  
The purpose of this community—  
of any church, temple, zendo, mosque—  
is to help its people grow.  
We do this through encounters with the unknown—in ourselves,  
in one another,  
in "The Other"—whoever that might be for us,  
however hard that might be—

because these encounters have many gifts to offer.

So may you go forth from here this morning  
[afternoon, evening]

not who you were,  
but who you could be.

So may we all. — by Erik Walker Wikstrom  
(used with permission)

## HANDOUT 2: FINAL EVALUATION

We humans are deeply, fundamentally, inescapably, relational beings. Our spirituality, our experiences of the sacred, revolves around how we relate to ourselves, to each other, to the cosmos. — Rev. Peter Morales, in *Bringing Gifts*, a publication of the Latino/Latina Unitarian Universalist Networking Alliance

Which activities, experiences, models, and methods in *Building the World We Dream About* helped you stretch or deepened your understanding of race and equity?

Please describe a particular activity that was successful in helping you learn.

Please describe an activity that was less effective for you or disappointed you.

What did you learn about how race, ethnicity, power, and privilege play out in your congregation and in the world?

How did the program shift your approach to thinking about and doing antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural work?

What do you consider the greatest challenges of doing antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural work?

If you were to write a letter to a mentor or friend about this experience, what would you say?

## LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE SHAKING OF THE FOUNDATIONS

From *The Shaking of the Foundations* by Paul Tillich.

Sometimes ... it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. *You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much ...

In the light of this grace we perceive the power of grace in our relation to others and to ourselves. We experience the grace of being able to look frankly into the eyes of another, the miraculous grace of reunion of life with life. We experience the grace of understanding each other's words. We understand not merely the literal meaning of the words, but also that which lies behind them, even when they are harsh or angry ... We experience the grace of being able to accept the life of another, even if it be hostile and harmful to us, for, through grace, we know that it belongs to the same Ground to which we belong, and by which we have been accepted. We experience the grace which is able to overcome the tragic separation of the sexes, of the generations, of the nations, of the races, and even the utter strangeness between humans and nature. Sometimes grace appears in all these separations to reunite us with those to whom we belong. For life belongs to life.

And in the light of this grace we perceive the power of grace in our relations to ourselves ... because we feel that we have been accepted by that which is greater than we ... We cannot force ourselves to accept ourselves. We cannot compel anyone to accept himself [*sic*]. But sometimes it happens that we receive the power to say "yes" to ourselves, that peace enters into us and makes us whole, that self-hate and self-contempt disappear, and that our self is reunited with itself. Then we can say that grace has come upon us.



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