

# SESSION 1

## Race: What's the Difference?

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### QUOTE

*Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world. – bell hooks, author, feminist, activist*

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Be the Change! A UU Training for Building Multicultural, Anti-Racist Beloved Community. This first session includes activities that help participants think about the identities we hold. Youth will think about their own identities and the value they place upon these, while recognizing that sometimes people are asked to hide identities or are excluded from communities because of their identity. This interferes with building the beloved community that embraces diversity and pluralism, which Unitarian Universalists desire.

### GOALS

This session will:

- Establish a covenantal relationship among participants
- Demonstrate how groups exclude some while including others
- Guide youth to name their identities and recognize how each person's identities provide their foundation for examining race and other differences.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Decide how they wish to be together and create a covenant
- Develop empathy for people who are excluded through playing a game
- Recognize and affirm their various identities and those of other participants
- Begin to understand how each person's identities provide their foundation for examining race and other differences.

### SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes (90 min.)
Opening	5

Activity 1: Our Covenant	10
Activity 2: Identity Game	30
Activity 3: Identity Mapping	40
Closing	5

## FAITH IN ACTION & ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Faith in Action: Mix It Up	
Alternate Activity 1: Identify Denied	30
Alternate Activity 2: Identity Formation Videos	25 - 50

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take a moment to sit by yourself. Light a chalice, make some tea, or engage in other grounding practices that feel right to you. You are about to embark on a journey to support youth in deconstructing racism and constructing beloved community. Today's work focuses on identity. Complete the identity map (Handout 1: Cummings Identity Map) for yourself.

Make time before the session to discuss the identity map with your co-facilitators. Which of your identities do you embrace wholeheartedly? Which have proven more difficult? All of your identities will be present when you facilitate these sessions. If one or more identity has caused you to experience exclusion, talk about what that was (or is) like. How will your experience inform your anti-racism work?

If you find writing helpful, we encourage you to start a journal with your thoughts. You might also use your journal to write some reflections after each session with the youth, as well as notes on the training as a whole.

# SESSION PLAN

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## OPENING (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chalice, candle and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1: Each Day
- Name badges and markers

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Set up the chalice in an appropriate place where everyone can sit around it in a circle or semi-circle.

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Invite participants to create a name badge, as they enter.

Ask the youth to silently reflect while you or a volunteer reads Leader Resource 1 aloud. Light the chalice.

Welcome participants. Say, in these words or your own:

This program is about creating beloved community, specifically by anti-racism efforts. Together, you will come to understand how race has been socially constructed and how it can be deconstructed. You will talk about the influence of race, ethnicity, and culture in your life. You will practice multicultural competencies.

Share the session's quote. Say:

In this session, we are going to talk about our identities.

## ACTIVITY 1: Our Covenant (10 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Inquire if there is a standard covenant, either for all religious education groups or for the youth group. If so, ask if you are allowed to build upon it.
- If there is no previous covenant, have suggestions ready to start the process. Use examples from covenant you have held or other religious education groups in the congregation or research youth covenants online. These might include:

- Assume best intentions.
- Honor diversity of identity, opinion, and approach. Speak from personal experiences, using “I” statements.
- Keep personal sharing confidential.
- Share the floor, make space for the quieter voices (“step up, step back”).
- Apologize if you make a mistake.
- Come with an open mind, open heart, and gentle curiosity.
- Speak up if someone else’s behavior breaks the covenant.
- Do not feel the need to “fix” anyone or anything.
- Pay attention to assumptions that you or others make.
- Avoid generalizations and pronouncements.

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Participants decide how they wish to be together.

Explain that a covenant is a promise, an agreement as to how we will relate to each other. Ask if anyone can explain the purpose of creating a group covenant. Affirm that it is important to build trust and safety within the space. Throughout the program, participants will share some of their personal experiences around race which can be a difficult subject. We need to talk about what can and cannot be shared and how we will support each other, even if we have differing opinions.

If there is a pre-existing covenant, review it with participants. Does everyone agree that the current items should stay on the covenant? Is anything missing?

If you are starting from scratch, invite participants to describe how they would like their conversations and interactions to feel. Then ask them to suggest guidelines for how they will behave with each other during the program to help their conversations and interactions rise to their aspirations. Write all suggestions on newsprint.

Ask participants if they would have concerns about or difficulty agreeing to any items listed. Discuss those items and decide as a group whether to keep, edit, or eliminate them. Pay particular attention to confidentiality. Youth will be invited to share from their own experiences and make commitments toward future behavior. Sometimes this will be very personal and private information that participants may not want shared. Will the group decide not to share any personal stories? Will they decide it is okay to share what they learned from hearing someone else’s story without sharing names of the people involved? Whatever is decided, remind participants that it is always okay to ask for complete confidentiality when sharing their personal story. However, let the group know that should someone disclose information about them or someone else being harmed or harming others or the possibility of harm, you will be required to report such behavior. Safety is one thing that trumps confidentiality.

Your group might contain people of varying ethnicities and races. Acknowledge that sharing personal experiences of racism might be different for participants with different identities. Make sure participants who hold marginalized identities are able to express their needs as you develop the covenant.

## ACTIVITY 2: Identity Game (30 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- For Identity Game: A variety of small stickers, various colors and shapes
- For Identity Game (optional): Small prizes, such as candy, for all participants
- For Birds of a Feather alternate activity: Index cards in blue and yellow, and pens or markers

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- **NOTE:** If your group has fewer than 15 participants, consider using the alternate activity, Birds of a Feather, described below. It may work better with your group.
- **For Identity Game:**
  - Divide the stickers ahead of time to distribute to the small groups. If the group has a large number of participants, consider typing instructions based on the description below to make a few copies to hand out with the stickers.
  - If any participants have visual impairment, prepare to pair them with a partner and to allow this pair to talk to one another.
- **For Birds of a Feather:**
  - Prepare enough index cards to give one to each member of your group. Mark one index card with the letter “T”. Label the other index cards—some blue, some yellow—with either the letter “A” or “E”.

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Participants develop empathy by experiencing inclusion and exclusion.

Tell the group they are going to play a game in which everyone will belong to a group and each person’s goal is to find their group without talking. Form small groups of four or more. Go to each group, tell them to close their eyes, and put a sticker on each person’s forehead. Explain to each group that the goal of the game is to find and stay with the folks who have stickers like yours, but give each group a DIFFERENT definition of what “stickers like yours” means (e.g., same shape, same color, shiny, same shape and color, same animal, etc.). Emphasize that the sticker group that does the best will get a small prize or candy. Tell participants they can’t talk but they can use other means of communication to help one another find their proper sticker groups.

Participants open their eyes and, without talking, try to find the sticker group to which they belong (about 5 minutes). When it becomes clear that people disagree about who belongs where, have people sit down. Debrief with these questions:

- Give one word that describes how you were feeling
- If you found a sticker group, what did it feel like to find your group?
- Were you told you couldn't be a part of a group to which you thought you belonged?
- Did you get consistent messages or mixed messages from some of the other players?
- Did it occur to you to invite people from "different" sticker groups into your group to make a bigger group?
- Why did we offer this activity in a session about racism? What does it have to do with this issue?

Say that having a group to which you belong is important. Though we may personally feel that we should welcome everyone into our group, sometimes our culture or society tells us otherwise. How are we to create beloved community if some people don't belong simply because of something superficial like color or shape?

If time allows, ask participants if the game brought up any memories for them of times they were excluded or times they excluded others.

### **Birds of a Feather: Alternate Activity for Groups < 15**

This game was created by Tracy Tagliati. It is posted on the website [www.thiagi.com](http://www.thiagi.com) and on the UUA Discovering Race resource page, [www.uua.org/discovering\\_race/multimedia](http://www.uua.org/discovering_race/multimedia).

Tell the group they are going to play a game. Everyone will belong to a group. There are two goals of the game: the first is to find others in your group; the second goal will be announced once you have found your group.

Distribute index cards. Tell participants they have a few minutes to form groups. Once groups are formed, tell them the second goal: to form the longest word they can with the index cards in their group. Most participants will have formed groups with others who have the same letter on their card. Some might have been even more exclusive and sought others with the same letter and same color card. They will not be able to form a word longer than one letter. If any group has mixed letters and can form a longer word, declare them the winner. The person with the card with the letter "T" might not be in a group at all. Ask youth if, knowing the second goal, they would like to group themselves differently. Let them do so and form words.

Process the activity with the following questions:

- How did you identify your group? Why did you think you belonged in that particular group?
- What are some reasons people tend to group themselves with people who are like them?

- What happened to the person with the letter “T”? What does this remind you of?
- What are some of the advantages of diversity in groups?
- Why did we offer this activity in a session about racism? What does it have to do with issue?
- Have you ever been part of a group that had difficulty accepting members who were different? What was that like?
- What assumptions should we be aware of to prevent our communities/groups from becoming exclusive?

### ACTIVITY 3: Identity Mapping (40 minutes)

#### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 1: Cummings Identity Map
- Leader Resource 2: Cummings Identity Map Instructions
- Pens or pencils

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Participants identify various identities they hold.

Say, in these words or your own:

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

We are going to use a tool developed by Unitarian Universalist minister the Reverend Dr. Monica Cummings to help each of us name our various identities. We can use this tool to help us think about our own cultural biases and the ways our cultural perspective might differ from that of another person, including other people in this room. We'll use the tool to help us name and appreciate the cultural differences among the members of our group. This activity will give us a framework for appreciating the cultural differences in society and illustrate the need for society as a whole to do the same.

Please spend five minutes silently on your own to fill out the identity map. Afterward, we'll have the opportunity to share with one another.

Invite participants to form groups of four and share whatever pieces of their identity

map they feel comfortable discussing. Each person gets two minutes to share. Gather the large group and spend the next 20 minutes answering the questions below:

- What surprised you about your own identity map?
- Which category was most difficult for you to complete?
- What differences did you find in your small group that might suggest differing perspectives?
- Our differences make us unique. Having our differences ignored can often be hurtful. Some people do not like to hear the phrase, “I’m color blind. I don’t see race.” Why might that be?
- What new insights have emerged for you?
- What does this have to do with dismantling racism?

Tell participants that many of our identities are fluid, that is, they may change over our lifetimes as we or our circumstances change. During this and future sessions, you will be focusing on racial and ethnic identity. Yet now you are able to recognize that our other identities—such as our gender, our age, our social economic class—overlap with our race and ethnicity, and contribute to making each of us unique.

Share this information with the group, in these words or your own:

Race is different from ethnicity. Ethnicity pertains to a set of characteristics shared by a people, especially a group sharing a common and distinctive culture (religion, homeland/country of origin, or the like). “American” is an ethnicity, as is “Latino/a.” Race is often broken into three classifications: Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Negroid, or, white, Asian, and black. It is often portrayed as immutable—that is, permanent, unchanging, and fixed by our DNA—due to people sharing less genetic variation within each of these races than is shared across the general population.

**Now, due to advances in genetics, we know that race is an artificial construct put into place for political and social reasons. It is not an important biological distinction. If race is a social construct, then so is racism. If racism has been constructed, it can be deconstructed.**

**This is the basic premise of this program: to understand how race was constructed, how racism hurts people of all racial identities, including white, acknowledge how racism is perpetuated and ask ourselves what we can do to deconstruct racism.**

**In future sessions, we’ll talk about how racism affects everyone and hampers our efforts to build the beloved community. We’ll look at race as a human construct. We’ll talk about why working actively against racism is a way to live our UU faith, and we will identify steps we all can take to deconstruct racism.**



## **CLOSING (5 minutes)**

### **MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY**

- Chalice, candle and extinguisher or LED battery-operated candle

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Thank participants for bringing all their identities to your time together. Invite any closing remarks about today's session. If the group will engage in Session 2, tell them the next session, "Why Should UUs Talk about Race?" will explore how dismantling racism relates to our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Invite the youth to blow out the chalice.

# FAITH IN ACTION & ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

## FAITH IN ACTION: Mix It Up

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Computer with Internet access and a digital projector, speakers, and projection screen

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Test equipment and queue the Mix It Up at Lunch webpage.

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Mix It Up at Lunch Day is a program of Teaching Tolerance, a program of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Read about it on the website for [Teaching Tolerance at http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/what-is-mix](http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/what-is-mix). Invite youth to mix it up by sitting somewhere they normally would not at their school lunch time, at a potluck at the congregation, or during a meal break at this program or conference. Suggest that youth (1) talk to someone whom they do not know—perhaps someone who appears to hold an identity different from theirs (different age, gender, ethnicity, ability); (2) tell them about their experience playing the inclusion/exclusion game; and (3) invite the person to share experiences of being included and experiences of being excluded. Encourage them by saying “You might make a new friend.”

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: Identity Denied (30 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Pipe cleaners in at least five different colors

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity is designed to follow Activity 3: Cummings Identity Map. Participants discuss how it feels to have an identity denied.

Ask each participant to take five pipe cleaners and, to themselves, identify each pipe cleaner as one identity they hold. Then, invite them to create an artistic design that demonstrates how these five identities intersect and relate to each other. Allow ten minutes for this part.

Next, ask participants to pair up and decide who is person A and who is person B. Tell person A to point to one of the pipe cleaners in person B’s creation and say, “Person B, you have just lost this identity.” When all pairs have done this, ask all the Person Bs to think about how they would feel without that identity. How would this loss affect their daily life? Their relationships? How would it affect the other identities they hold? Invite Person B to share these thoughts with Person A. Give them several minutes.

Now switch and ask Person B to choose a pipe cleaner to delete from Person A's creation. Invite Person A to think about the same questions and share with Person B.

Gather the large group. Ask what this experience was like. Has anyone ever experienced having a part of their identity denied? How does saying things like "We're all alike" and "I don't see race" deny someone's identity? How does denying someone any of their identities keep us from forming beloved community?

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: Identity Formation Videos (25- 50 minutes)**

### **MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY**

- Computer with Internet access and a digital projector, speakers, and projection screen

### **PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY**

- Visit the UUA's web page for Workshops on Identity-Based Topics ([www.uua.org/re/youth/identity-based/](http://www.uua.org/re/youth/identity-based/)). Two of the workshops are (1) Introduction to Ethnic Identity Formation for Youth of Color and (2) Introduction to White Identity Formation for Youth. Preview the videos associated with both workshops; if your group includes youth of color, plan to show and process both videos (this will take more time). Review the workshop discussion guides and plan how you will lead the group to process the video(s).
- Test equipment and queue video(s).

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Participants reflect on the process of racial identity formation.

Watch the video(s) appropriate for the youth in your group (one or both videos). Use as much of the discussion provided in the video workshops as time allows.

# RESOURCES

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## LEADER RESOURCE 1: Each Day

“Each Day” by Kristen Harper appears in *Voices from the Margins: An Anthology of Meditations* edited by Jacqui James and Mark D. Morrison-Reed (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2012). Used with the author’s permission.

Each day provides us with an opportunity to love again,

To hurt again, to embrace joy

To experience unease,

To discover the tragic

Each day provides us with the opportunity to live.

This day is no different, this hour no more unique than the last,

Except...Maybe today, maybe now,

Among friends and fellow journeyers,

Maybe for the first time, maybe silently,

We can share ourselves.

## LEADER RESOURCE 2: Cummings Identity Map Instructions

*The Cummings Identity Map was created by Reverend Dr. Monica Cummings, 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, American Counseling Association.*

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** include mental, physical, and acquired disabilities.
- **Sexual Orientation** includes Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people.
- **Gender** includes female, male, and transgendered people.

## HANDOUT 1: Cummings Identity Map Worksheet

*The Cummings Identity Map was created by Reverend Dr. Monica Cummings, 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, American Counseling Association.*

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