

Lesson Plans that Work

Racial Justice Lesson Plan for Young Adults

Telling the Truth about the Church and Race

Lesson Two Theme	Becoming Beloved Community Path	Scripture 1	Scripture 2	Way of Love Practice
Racism	Telling the Truth about the Church and Race	Mark 7:24-30 Focus: 7:27-29	Matthew 15:21-28 Focus: 15:27-28	Learn

Prayer

O God, you have bound us together in everyday life.

As we struggle to work toward justice and truth, help us confront one another without hatred or bitterness and work together with mutual forbearance and respect.

We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

– *Modified prayer In Times of Conflict BCP p. 824*

About Racism

Race is a social construct, which means that society built or constructed its meaning. There is only one race, the human race. Some people decided that they could benefit from separating people by their skin color, and as a result, we live in a country that distinguishes us by our race. We can tell that race is a social construct by comparing our racial groupings to those in other countries. They don't match up precisely because these definitions are not scientific or based on genetics.

The dominant culture is the culture that holds the most power. In the US, white, middle class, cisgender people are considered the dominant culture. Men have more agency than women. The dominant culture is "normal," and anyone who falls outside of that culture is viewed through the dominant culture's lens. That narrow viewpoint can lead to racism and prejudice.

Racism is defined in many different ways. You might think of particular words people say to or about others. You might know racism as behaviors toward black and brown people for no reason other than their skin color. Many people believe that the difference between prejudice, which is your personal bias about another person, and racism is power. In her book *This Book Is Anti-Racist*, Tiffany Jewell defines racism this way:

Personal prejudice + bias + systemic misuse and abuse of power by institutions = Racism.

White supremacy is the concept that white people are superior to black and brown people because of their skin color. White supremacy fuels systemic racism, which can be defined as organized and planned actions against people of color and supporting or profiting white people.

Understanding racism and white supremacy are not concepts we address to make people feel guilty. Doing this work is about living into our Baptismal Covenant as Christians and Episcopalians.

Becoming Beloved Community Four-fold path: Telling the Truth about the Church and Race

We can't fix the sin of racism without telling the truth.

Baptismal Promise

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

I will, with God's help.

Questions

- Who are we? How do we identify ourselves as unique individuals?
- How do we describe ourselves as members of our communities and society?
- Who does God say we are? Check last week's scriptures for insight.
- Who do you notice has power? Pay attention to people's power and race in various institutions, like your school, school board, church, vestry, and local government.

Bible Study

Scripture 1: [Mark 7:24-30](#)

Scripture 2: [Matthew 15:21-28](#)

Invite the group to read together the two scriptures and then discuss. Keep in mind that having different voices reading can help people hear and understand in new ways.

- Read Mark 7:24-30. What words or phrases stand out to you?
- Read verses 27-29. What surprises you about these passages? Notice and comment on anything you wish to share.
- Read the three verses one more time. What do those verses say about discrimination?
- Now read Mark 7:24-30. What words or phrases do you notice?
- Read verses 27-28. What surprises you about those verses? Share any observations or realizations you have.
- Read verses 27-28 one more time. Compare them to Matthew 15:27-29. What similarities do you notice? What is different? What do those verses add to your understanding of racism?
- What does it mean for Jesus to discriminate against the Canaanite woman? How does it make you feel that Jesus did that?
- Have you ever treated someone the way Jesus treated the woman?
- Have you ever been treated the way Jesus treated the woman?
- Read a different translation, like Common English Bible, The Message, or King James. How does it compare? Which do you prefer?

Activities

Individual Activity	Group Activity
Slavery undergirds racism in the USA. Read the table of contents of The 1619 Project . Which article draws you in? Read articles that interest you, no matter how painful, and view the photo essays.	Present what you learn from The 1619 Project with your congregation. Invite them into conversation about what they learned that they didn't learn in school or in the news.

Way of Love Practice

Learn <https://episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love/practice/learn>

Reflect on scripture every day, especially Jesus' life and teachings

- How can scripture help us tell the truth?
- What must we learn about the history of racism in this country to help us tell the truth?
- How was scripture used to promote racism and white supremacy?

Prayer

Dear God, help us to use scripture to teach us how you want us to live. When something we do or see doesn't match your teachings, give us the strength to change, however hard it might be. In Jesus' name we pray, *Amen*.

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