



CONVERSATIONS ON RACISM

AROUND THE KITCHEN TABLE



Friends,

The *Around the Kitchen Table* resources are intended to foster conversations in our own homes about racism. We encourage you to identify one time each week to spend with those who sit at your kitchen table – maybe your children, your parents, your neighbors, your spouse, or yourself.

The resources can shape your conversations around our shared hope and faith. It is perhaps uncomfortable, challenging, and different; yet, in that discomfort and growth, there is holiness.

Accompanying your conversations are short prayers, scripture readings, and blessings to help honor and shape the sacred space. You may want to consider setting up a space in your home. Here are a few possibilities:

- light one or many candles
- bring something in your home that reminds you of justice
- lay out a sign or symbol of peace
- use a tablecloth of one or many colors and bring in items from your garden, nature, or a walk – flowers, greenery, rocks, etc.
- use whatever food or drink is usually on your kitchen table – dinner, breakfast, tea and cookies, coffee and cereal, etc.

These conversations are meant for your kitchen table, where you gather each day, with the people you gather with, but gathered to have a conversation that might be a bit more challenging and encourage some sense of action within you.

May God's peace be with you. And may God's justice wrestle within you.

Grace

GRACE LINDVALL

Associate Pastor for Education

Julia

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WEEK ONE - BLESSED

Opening

One person reads: We gather together with honesty, with trust, with some trepidation, with some fear. We gather together to speak truth, to question, to wonder, and to look for hope. We trust that God is present with us, guiding, encouraging, and sustaining us.

Scripture Reading

Luke 6:39-42

He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.'



WEEK ONE - BLESSED

Read aloud this excerpt from *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo:

"When somebody asks you to 'check your privilege' they are asking you to pause and consider how the advantages you've had in life are contributing to your opinions and actions, and how the lack of disadvantages in certain areas is keeping you from fully understanding the struggles others are facing and may in fact be contributing to those struggles. It is a big ask, to check your privilege. It is hard and often painful, but it's not nearly as painful as living with the pain caused by the unexamined privilege of others...The possibilities of where you can leverage your privilege to make real, measurable change toward a better world are endless.

"Every day you are given opportunities to make the world better, by making yourself a little uncomfortable and asking, 'who doesn't have this same freedom or opportunity that I'm enjoying now?' These daily interactions are how systems of oppression are maintained, but with awareness, they can be how we tear those systems down. So please, check your privilege. Check it often."



WEEK ONE - BLESSED

Ask these questions of yourself and those at your kitchen table:

- As you approach this conversation, notice how you are feeling (e.g. uncomfortable, eager, curious, tired, hopeful, etc.) What might be contributing to that feeling within you?
- What advantages or disadvantages do you experience because of your skin color?
- What is one way your awareness of race and racism has developed in the past year?
- How might you “leverage your privilege to make real, measurable change toward a better world?”

Closing Together in Prayer

God of justice and love, empower and equip us to open our hearts, our ears, and our eyes. Help us to see that which we often ignore, to listen to voices we often cast aside, and to be open to the ways you are calling us to action and love. Help us to listen for the ways you call us, to be courageous to move in ways that are new and uncomfortable, and to lean on your presence when we feel uncertain. In Christ we pray, Amen.

Blessing

May the grace of God surround you, the love of Christ surround you, and the calling of the Spirit send you forth. Amen.



WEEK TWO - BROKEN

Opening

One person reads: We're here to talk, to listen, to learn, to look for ways to challenge ourselves and challenge the world around us to be as Christ taught us and loved us into being.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Read aloud this excerpt from *A Riff of Love* by Greg Jarrell

An excerpt from a father's letter to his white sons: "You have already learned that [racism] hurts our neighbors. We often talk about some of the ways it hurts them. Sometimes they lose their homes, or they do not have enough food, or their families have to live apart from each other because of unfair laws and unfair policing. You know this, and you see it, and you hate it already, and I love that about you. But I need to tell you that although you cannot see it yet, this culture is harming you, too."



WEEK TWO - BROKEN

A Riff of Love, cont'd

"And me. And everybody who thinks they are white. When we see the reflection that places us at the center, it keeps us from seeing the truth about ourselves.

"It gives us a role in the story that does not belong to us, at least not all the time. There is a long history among our people of thinking we are heroes who bring good news and save the day. There may have been times when our people were heroes, but many times our people have been on the wrong side of stories.

"We have taken other people's land, or their children. We have to tell them also. We especially have to tell them, so that we can stop repeating them."

Ask these questions of yourself and those at your kitchen table:

- What stories about race did you learn growing up? How have you carried them into your adulthood?
- How do you see the connection between our nation's past, present, and future when it comes to race?
- What are some ways racism hurts white people? If you haven't considered this question before, why do you think that is?
- If you were to write a letter about racism to a loved one, what would you want to communicate?



WEEK TWO - BROKEN

Closing Together in Prayer

God, you bind us together to be the body of Christ, to love those whom you love, and serve those whom you serve. You bind us together to do hard work, knowing that we cannot do it alone. Bind us together that our bonds may be a beacon of hope and a strength for this challenging and necessary work. Remind us again and again of the hope that justice will roll down like the waters and mercy like an ever flowing stream. In Christ we pray, Amen.

Blessing

May the grace of God surround you, the love of Christ surround you, and the calling of the Spirit send you forth. Amen.



WEEK THREE - GIVEN

Opening

One person reads: We have committed to these hard conversations. May we commit, too, to the hard work which grows from them. May we gather and talk and learn in such a way that we are shaped to go into the world and challenge the struggles within it.

Scripture Reading

Romans 12:1-3

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.



WEEK THREE - GIVEN

Read aloud this excerpt from “Transformed Nonconformist” in *Strength to Love* by Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Nowhere is the tragic tendency to conform more evident than in the church, an institution that has often served to crystallize, conserve, and even bless the patterns of majority opinion.

“The erstwhile sanction by the church of slavery, racial segregation, war, and economic exploitation is testimony to the fact that the church has hearkened more to the authority of the world than to the authority of God.

“Called to be the moral guardian of the community, the church has preserved that which is immoral and unethical. Called to combat social evils, it has remained silent behind stained-glass windows. Called to lead [humanity] on the highway of brotherhood and to summon them to rise above the narrow confines of race and class, it has enunciated and practiced racial exclusiveness... If the church of Jesus Christ is to regain once more its power, message, and authentic ring, it must conform only to the demands of the gospel.”



WEEK THREE - GIVEN

Ask these questions of yourself and those at your kitchen table:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote these words over 60 years ago. Regarding his message, what do you feel has changed since then? What has not?
- Over the years, what has contributed to the church's tendency to remain "silent behind stained-glass windows?"
- What grieves you about the wider church's response to racism today? What gives you hope?
- How do you feel God is calling you to be a part of the church's present response?

Closing Together in Prayer

God of peace and God of hope, bless us again with your peace, that we may see and know true peace which passes all understanding. Help us to place our hope in you that we might know the marvelous and wondrous things you have planned for our world. Encourage us to work for the world not as it is but as you imagine and created it to be. In Christ we pray, Amen.

Blessing

May the grace of God surround you, the love of Christ surround you, and the calling of the Spirit send you forth. Amen.



