

What Lies Between Us

Fostering First Steps Toward Racial Healing

Syllabus

What Lies Between Us is designed as a 10-unit workshop in fostering the first steps toward racial healing with an emphasis on individual and group practice. This study provides participants with an opportunity to learn about the racial history of the United States and its impact on the personal and collective racial dynamics inside and outside of the church. Participants will develop competence by developing working definitions of individual and systemic racism and creating action plans for personal transformation and systemic change.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon successful completion participants will have demonstrated:

- (1) competence in listening to the stories of others with humility, empathy, and mother love
- (2) evolving capacities for introspection and self-awareness
- (3) an understanding of how the theology of the Church and its historical development have played a role in supporting systemic injustice

Study FORMAT: The class meets twice monthly *via ZOOM* for 1.5 hours (2nd and 4th Wednesdays 4:00 PM-5:30 PM PST)

This study is intended to be engaging and primarily focused on thinking, writing, discussion and practice. There is regular homework to assist in the process of reflecting on, wrestling with, and internalizing the content

This class is for ordained and non-ordained persons in the church and community who want to gain skills in the practice of racial healing

GOAL: Participants will begin to engage in racial healing for personal transformation through practices that include scriptural interpretation, prayer, reflection, and sacred conversation

Signups for opening and closing prayers: [Form to Signup](#)

Session 1 February 10, 2021 “Why”

Saying yes to a process of transformation (Reflect, Rethink, Reach)

Individual and group processes

Go slow: pray, think, feel, revisit, remember, think, and feel again

Signups for opening and closing prayers: [Form to Signup](#)

Homework

- Read and work through pages 25-38
- Blog post topic: **My hopes for this study**

Session 2 February 24, 2021 “Believe Differently”

The Pyramid of Truth

Common Language and Terms

Respectful Communication and Mutual Invitation

Homework

- Watch “[The Difference Between Us: Race—The Power of an Illusion](#)”
(*username: posf | password: digital*)
- Work through pages 39-46
- Blog post topic: **An “Aha!” moment from the video**

Session 3 March 10, 2021 “Race, Genetics, and Biology”

Where did your ideas on race come from? What do you want to do about them?

Individual and small group conversations

Homework

- Watch “[The Story We Tell: Race—The Power of an Illusion](#)”
(*username: posf | password: digital*)
- Work through pages 47-55

Session 4 March 24, 2021 “A Lie Perpetuated”

How has the race narrative affected your sense of identity?

Small group conversation

Homework

- Watch “[The House We Live In: Race—The Power of an Illusion](#)”
(username: posf | password: digital)
- Work through pages 57-67

Session 5 April 14, 2021 “The Profit of Race”

Why are so many people in the United States poor?

Are you and/or your church complicit in systemic poverty? Tell why or why not

Homework

- Work through pages 69-76

Session 6 April 28, 2021 “Disrupting Lies, Living Truth”

Were you ever shamed into not talking about race?

Do you have shame associated with your “racial identity?”

Small group discussion

Homework

- Watch the [Implicit Association video](#) and take the [Black White IAT test](#)
- Work through pages 77-84
- Blog post topic: **What my IAT test showed. What I learned from the results and how I feel about them**

Session 7 May 12, 2021 “Representation, Stereotypes, and Bias”

What are the ways “light” and “dark” are used in biblical imagery and storytelling? What ways could they be used in support of biased media representation, stereotypes, and implicit bias?

What is the racial image of Jesus in your church? What theological message do you think it sends?

Is there an American flag in the sanctuary of your church? What theological message do you think it sends?

Video: [White supremacy and biblical interpretation by Rev Dr Wilda Gafney](#)

Small group conversation

Homework

- Listen to a podcast from [This American Life: The problem We All Live With](#)
- Work through pages 85-92
- Blog post topic: **How I felt while listening to the podcast**

Session 8 May 26, 2021 “Power, Policies, People”

What are the similarities and differences between individual and systemic racism?

Small group conversation

Homework

- Work through pages 93-100

Session 9 June 9, 2021 “After Amen”

How will you take action to transform yourself and the places God has sent you to create a more beautiful world?

Small group conversation

Homework

- Prepare to share gratitude, appreciation, 1 pearl and 1 promise

Session 10 June 23, 2021 “Conclusion”

Large group sharing

Renewal of baptismal vows

Closing Prayer

Blog post topic: **“The struggle continues.”** My takeaways from this study