

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

Getting Ready
Materials

— 2015 —



LESSON FIVE

TOGETHER WE RISE
Leader Guide

#RiseUpELCA



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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LEADER GUIDE

Please read this leader guide in its entirety before continuing on to the lesson plan. The leader guide is essential to prepare you to teach this lesson to your group.

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 2014-2015 Pre-Gathering Racial Awareness Training. Please note, this lesson is designed to take 1 hour and 45 minutes. It is longer than the other lessons in the Getting Ready Materials. Within this packet, you will find a collection of activities, lessons and factoids pertaining to prejudice, bias and racism (overt and covert). These lessons are intended to help guide participants into a new framework and mindset prior to their arrival in Detroit. If you have studied any Detroit history, you will have already realized that its past and present are inextricably tied to race and politics. The long-term systematic oppression of the city of Detroit, and its majority African American population, now serves as perhaps the largest example of structural/institutional racism in America over the last decade. Young adults and their leaders **MUST** have a basic understanding of race relations if they plan to serve as an asset, advocate and partner for this city and its people.

Many Lutheran adult leaders will at this point in their lives have gone through some semblance of anti-racism training. This term, anti-racism, may already carry some very distinct, and potentially negative, baggage. Race relations, and distinctly white privilege, have created an immense amount of pain, suffering and mistrust in America. The world of anti-racism, or racial awareness, training continues to grow and develop as trainers grapple with describing this pain to primarily white audiences at the risk of creating a state of paralysis. We as trainers struggle with the question: How do we properly motivate while being true to the suffering that a racist legacy has created?

The racial awareness curriculum included in this packet is no exception to this phenomenon, and it will continue to grow and develop into a work that is as impactful as it is efficient. In itself, it provides some distinct challenges: 1) Unlike typical anti-racism trainings, it does not come with a trainer, and 2) It is limited to a 105-minute program. As such, this curriculum provides definitions and examples of only some of the core concepts and is ingrained in a discussion instead of a presentation. As the writer, I cannot be there to help guide the discussion in a particular fashion, or provide additional answers. I can only prepare the table and relinquish control of these discussions to both the facilitators and the participants. It is up to you to flesh out these concepts in a real and critical way. Even if you have no experience leading this type of training, and even if you are nervous and uncomfortable with it, it is still vitally important for your group to work its way through this lesson. Thank you for taking on the challenge.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will learn about prejudice and discrimination as it affects all people.
2. Participants will be able to perceive and cite examples of racial conflict in day-to-day life.
3. Participants will gain an understanding of the four levels of racism.
4. Participants will learn of privilege and what it looks like in America.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

A training based on discussion will lean heavily on facilitator guidance. Any debate or counter-examples are helpful when a community is committed in true dialogue. However, there are definite intentions in what conclusions are drawn from this curriculum. Below is the backdrop of many of the concepts included in the training. These ideas are laid out straightforwardly here, with the intention of being enforced through the examples provided in the curriculum.

Race is what is called a **social construct**: something that only becomes tangible because society attaches meaning to it. If society, American people as a cohesive unit, stopped attaching value to skin color, race, racism and discrimination would cease to exist. It is because of this fact that some individuals try a “color blind” approach to their own communications with others. They go through their daily lives intentionally ignoring race in their interactions. The logic becomes, if I fail to see or pay attention to race, discrimination and the effects of racism will not exist.

However, because of the existence and persistence of **structural racism**, race plays a role in our society whether we acknowledge it or not. The value placed on race has been built into the very structure of the growth and development of this country since its inception. Race is a concept that has become a real factor in determining and mitigating the experience of each person in America. Ignoring someone’s race will not keep it from having a real effect on his or her day-to-day lives. Ignoring race is ignoring an innate, and critical, part of someone’s life experience. We cannot sympathize, empathize, or truly be in community with others if we deny the forces that change their lives.





BACKGROUND MATERIAL (CONTINUED)

Structural racism works toward the disadvantage of people of color, and especially those of African American descent, and to the advantage of those who are white. This advantage and disadvantage move beyond social class and wealth or poverty. Being rewarded by a structurally racist system is a *privilege* that is exclusive to white people, and is unavailable to those of other races. Affirmative action attempts to reduce this racial privilege gap, but it only helps to counter white privilege: It cannot replace or eliminate it.

As long as privilege is tied so predominantly to one race, the system itself will remain broken and innately racist. And as long as the structures of our country remain racist, racism and discrimination will remain a factor in everyone's lives. We must see racism, understand privilege, and work together to change an unjust system.

This will not be a shame-and-blame-presentation but will still be a challenge for the young adults participating. Racism has been a pervasive, but changing, force in America. Because of its changing forms, many have been taught that racism no longer exists, making its denial an acceptable framework to live by. Getting through all of these taught-myths and to a place of true acceptance and understanding will take effective and patient guidance. Finally, this lesson will need to be ingrained in the concept of love: for those involved in the lesson, those affected by a broken system, and those we are called to be in communion with — “the other” — in the name of Christ.

Pauses for prayer and breathing will be necessary throughout.

In anticipation of the training, if you have any particular questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the author, Nathaniel Viets-VanLear at nvietsvanlear@gmail.com.

EXTRA RESOURCES

Here are some extra resources that you and your group may wish to use.

Click on each resource title to find it online.



Nathaniel Viets-VanLear is a teacher, artist and racial activist. A graduate of St. Olaf College, and lifelong Lutheran, he has partnered extensively with the ELCA through a variety of projects and is dedicated to the developing conversation of faith and its role in racial justice.

VIDEOS

[“Race – The Power of an Illusion”](#)

An in-depth, 3-part, documentary on the power and existence of race.

ARTICLES *(Available online)*

[“The Story in our Genes” by Sribala Subramanian](#)

A counter to race in genetics and intelligence.

[“Three is Not Enough” by Sharon Begley](#)

A critique on human classification in America.

[“Study Finds Bias in \(Twin Cities\) Mortgages” by Jim Buchta](#)

An analysis of unequal lending practices in the Twin Cities of Minnesota.

[“The Short End of the Longer Life” by Kevin Sack](#)

A study on race and its correlation with life span.

[“How can we prepare teachers to work with culturally diverse students and their families?” by The Harvard Family Project](#)

ACTIVITIES *(Others available at Edchange.org)*

These activities might be helpful when leading a racial awareness training.

1. [Ground Rules Examples](#)
2. [Name Activity](#)
3. [Sharing Stories: Prejudice Activity](#)
4. [Everyday Racism](#)

BOOKS

[“A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America” by Ronald Takaki](#)

[“Witnessing Whiteness: The need to talk about race and how to do it” by Shelly Tochluk](#)

[“The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an age of Colorblindness” by Michelle Alexander](#)

INTRODUCTION

(5 minutes)

1. RITUAL

Begin your time together in a way that is meaningful for your group. Maybe you have a song you like to sing together, or a prayer you like to say.

2. GOALS

This month's lesson is designed to get us talking about racism so that we will become more aware of it in our own lives and in the larger society. It will be a challenging lesson but an important one.

LESSON PLAN

GROUND RULES, OR COVENANTING

(10 minutes)

Have a whiteboard, chalkboard or large sheet of paper taped to the wall for this exercise.

1. TEACH

Before we begin, let's make a list of rules we should follow for all of our discussions today. What are some guidelines we should have? How can we keep this conversation safe? What would make you feel comfortable speaking? What does it mean to speak or listen respectfully?

2. BRAINSTORM

Have the group generate a list of ground rules that will allow everyone to feel safe while having this conversation. Have the entire group verbally agree to the ground rules before continuing.

PART ONE Sharing Stories of Prejudice

(20 minutes)

1. TEACH

Everyone has experienced or witnessed prejudice and discrimination, and it comes in a variety of forms (not just racial). The word **prejudice** can be defined as a pre-judgment, or forming of an opinion, not based on actual experience. Unlike intuition, or gut-instinct, prejudice is socially formed by what we hear about or are taught about "the other." Although prejudice is most often used in reference to race, or racism, there are many different people we pre-judge in America, sometimes without even realizing it.

2. DISCUSS

As a large group, shout out some ideas of who the "other" is in our community and beyond. Who do we pre-judge as being different, less-than or strange?

PART ONE

(continued)

LESSON PLAN

3. TEACH

In order to enforce prejudice, we use **stereotypes** to help emphasize traits we associate with different populations of people. **Discrimination** occurs when we use our prejudice and stereotypes to make actual decisions, especially to the disadvantage of those who are different.

4. SMALL GROUPS

Break into small groups of no larger than three people. Ask participants to share a time when they've had one of the following three experiences. (Have these written out beforehand so the participants can see them while in their groups.)

Participants are often reluctant to volunteer to begin sharing in this activity, particularly when required to tell a story about how they have discriminated against someone else. A good strategy is for the facilitator to share his or her own story first, perhaps even with the large group. This vulnerability will help build up momentum in the group.

- a. A time you have experienced prejudice or discrimination.
- b. A time you have discriminated or stereotyped someone else.
- c. A time you have witnessed discrimination.

PART TWO Race in Real Life

(15 minutes)

1. TEACH

Now we are going to run through some real day-to-day examples around ethnicity, race and conflict. Many of these examples may ring true for you in your life or the life of someone you know.

2. SMALL GROUPS

Break your group up into smaller groups of three to six participants each. Once they are in their groups, distribute the **Race in Real Life Case Studies** so each person has a copy. Read through each case study out loud and then assign two or three case studies to each small group. Ask them to reread their case studies and discuss the following questions for each case study the group is assigned.

- What are your reactions to this example?
- Why do you think the people acted or reacted they way that they did?
- How can you relate to this?

LESSON PLAN

PART THREE Race in Real Life

(40 minutes)

1. TEACH

The small case studies you just went through were great examples of racial conflict from one person to another. This is how we usually view and talk about racism, as an act or set of behaviors, at an **Interpersonal Level**. However, racism can be expressed at many different levels in our society. Here are the four levels we try to acknowledge in the ELCA. (Distribute and work through the **Four Levels of Racism** sheet).

2. LARGE GROUP

Tell the group that you are going to look at a simple scenario that includes examples of all four levels of racism. Distribute the **Analyzing an Everyday Situation** handout. Assign the parts – Narrator, Mr. Perez, Tony, Jason, Nary – and ask for the script to be read out loud.

3. INDIVIDUAL WORK

Allow the participants 5 minutes to answer questions 1–4 from the handout on their own. After 5 minutes, have them get back into their small groups from earlier in this lesson.

4. SMALL GROUPS

Once the participants are back in their previous small groups, have each group spend 15 minutes choosing a level of racism and brainstorming ways to produce change at that level by answering questions 5 and 6.

5. DISCUSSION

As a large group, share examples of the four levels of racism that you have experienced or heard about. What can we do about this as a congregation?

LESSON PLAN

PART FOUR Oppression and Privilege

(10 minutes)

1. TEACH

While the different levels of racism affect everyone in America, they do not affect all groups equally. Structural racism works against all people of color. However, because of the effects of *privilege*, those who are white-skinned avoid being disadvantaged by structural racism, and actually benefit from it.

2. TEACH

White privilege is a term that indicates the benefits and privileges a white-skinned person accumulates in a society that is set up to reward white people. These advantages and disadvantages move beyond social class and income level, and have many different, and often unnoticed effects, in all of our daily lives.

3. VIDEO

[Show this simple and short Buzz Feed Video](#), summarizing privilege.

4. DISCUSSION

As a group, discuss reactions to the video. What is this “bucket example” actually referring to? What are some other specific examples of “the front row” in our society? What are some examples of “the back row”? Where do you fit in? How should we deal with the privilege or lack of privilege that we have?

FINAL FIVE

(5 minutes)

Gather as group in one large circle. Explain to the group that this will be a brief order of confession and forgiveness following the format from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal. Distribute a copy of the **Corporate Confession and Forgiveness** and proceed to lead the group through this closing time of prayer.

HANDOUT**ANALYZING
AN EVERYDAY
SITUATION
USING LEVELS
OF RACISM**

Narrator: Tony is an African American student about to begin high school. He wants to be the first in his family to attend college and hopes to be a biologist. He did well in middle school and took advanced math. But he didn't score well on the school district's new high school placement exam. Compared to white students, most Black and Latino students don't score as well on this exam. The students of color mostly come from two middle schools, known as the worst schools in the district, in the poorest part of town. They are overcrowded and have the least qualified teachers. When Tony enrolled at the high school, he was referred to Mr. Perez, the guidance counselor. He was happy that Mr. Perez was Latino since most of the teachers at the high school are white.

Mr. Perez: Tony, you seem like a good student but I recommend that you enroll in the pre-algebra class instead of the regular algebra class.

Narrator: Mr. Perez, for years, has been routinely advising most African American and Latino students to take pre-algebra because many of them fail regular algebra.

Tony: But I've already taken advanced math in middle school and I know that algebra is a requirement before I can take any science classes.

Mr. Perez: I'd really like to help you, but the school district has new testing policies – if you don't score well on the placement exam, you can't take algebra. That's the rules.

Narrator: Mr. Perez didn't have the heart to tell Tony that his chances of getting into the local college were not good because you need more than three high school science classes. If you take pre-algebra freshman year and regular algebra sophomore year, you'd have to take all three science classes in your last two years of high school. After meeting with Mr. Perez, Tony talked to his friend Jason, one of the few white students who attended the same middle school as Tony.

Jason: Are we gonna be in the same algebra class together?

Tony: I guess not. They're making me take pre-algebra because of my placement test scores. It's the new policy and I don't have a choice.

Jason: Those tests are messed up. Guess you can't do much about it if those are the rules.

Narrator: Jason didn't tell Tony that he had just overheard his white friends in the hallway saying, "since mostly whites got into algebra class, it proves that they must be smarter." Tony then talked to his friend Nary, who is Cambodian, and one of the few Asian Americans at the school.

Nary: I have to take pre-algebra too. I don't have any brains to pass the regular algebra class. Who needs advanced math anyway? I can get a better grade in home economics.

Narrator: As the day went on, Tony realized that most white students had in fact, gotten into algebra while most students of color were assigned to pre-algebra. He felt angry, disappointed and embarrassed about his test scores. He wasn't sure if there was anything that he could do. His excitement about beginning high school was quickly beginning to fade.

HANDOUT

**ANALYZING
AN EVERYDAY
SITUATION
USING LEVELS
OF RACISM**

Answer the six questions listed here. List in each box the level of racism that you think is occurring in the scenario. You don't have to identify every possible example because it's important to have time to address the last questions.

<p>1. What are examples of Internalized Racism (racism with individuals)?</p>	<p>2. What are examples of Interpersonal Racism (racism between individuals)?</p>
<p>3. What are examples of Institutionalized Racism (racism within institutions and systems of power)?</p>	<p>4. What are examples of Structural Racism (racism among institutions and across society)?</p>

- 5. What is a proposed solution that could produce change at the level of racism your group examined in this scenario?
- 6. Even if your group did not answer #3 or #4, what proposed solution that could produce institutional or structural change in this scenario?

SOURCE: *Racial Justice Leadership*, by Terry Keler, Applied Research Center (Revised 3/08).
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HANDOUT

RACE IN REAL LIFE CASE STUDIES

- 1.** A Latina speaks English with an accent. When she has important discussions with her coworkers, she feels that sometimes she isn't taken seriously.
- 2.** In one diverse neighborhood, families struggle to make ends meet. People who just came from other countries move in. They get lots of attention and help from the community. The long-time neighbors are angry because their own needs aren't being met.
- 3.** An African American couple tells their children to be extra careful at the shopping mall. They remind the children to stay together. They also tell them to keep receipts for everything they buy.
- 4.** After a terrorist attack is in the news, a man who is from the Middle East cancels his travel plans. He is afraid of being harassed or bullied by airport guards.
- 5.** A white couple is walking to their car after seeing a late movie. They see a group of young black men coming toward them. The couple crosses the street.
- 6.** On an Internet chat room, a group of students makes racial insults about a classmate. No one tries to correct or challenge them.
- 7.** A man enters a neighborhood store. He feels that the manager, who is from a different ethnic group, is keeping an eye on him. He thinks the manager doesn't trust him.
- 8.** An Asian American student feels pressure from teachers and other students. They expect her to be at the top of her class in every subject.
- 9.** A town manager hires a Latina. Her job is to work with the town office and the growing Latino community. Some African Americans are frustrated that no one has been hired to address their needs.
- 10.** A Vietnamese woman, who doesn't speak English, is very ill. Her doctor thinks she may die. He asks the woman's child, who speaks Vietnamese and English, to tell her mom how sick she is.

HANDOUT

FOUR LEVELS OF RACISM

1. INTERNALIZED RACISM

Racism within individuals, toward themselves. When a person's self identification with a particular racial group enforces ideas of superiority or inferiority.

2. INTERPERSONAL RACISM

Racism between individuals (the most apparent of the four). When racist actions are inflicted upon a particular person because of the color of their skin.

3. INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Racism within institutions and systems of power (e.g., schools, city government, congregations, etc.) When social institutions enforce policies that put a particular racial group at a disadvantage.

4. STRUCTURAL RACISM

Racism among institutions all across society (e.g., the American education system, history (as it is written), societal racial norms). When large-scale forces combine to create standards defined by race.

HANDOUT**CORPORATE
CONFESSION AND
FORGIVENESS**

*Adapted from Evangelical Lutheran
Worship pages 79, and 238-242*

Leader: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

All: O God of all, with wonderful diversity of languages and cultures you created all people in your image. Free us from prejudice and fear, that we may see your face in the faces of people around the world; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Leader: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us. For self-centered living; and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Leader: For longing to have what is not ours, and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Leader: For misuse of human relationships, and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others:

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Leader: For jealousies that divide families and nations, and for rivalries that create strife and warfare:

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Leader: For reluctance in sharing the gifts of God and for carelessness with the fruits of creation:

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Leader: For hurtful words that condemn and for angry deeds that harm:

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Leader: For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ and for squandering the gifts of love and grace:

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Leader: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.

All: Amen.

Leader: Go in freedom to love your neighbor.

All: Thanks be to God!